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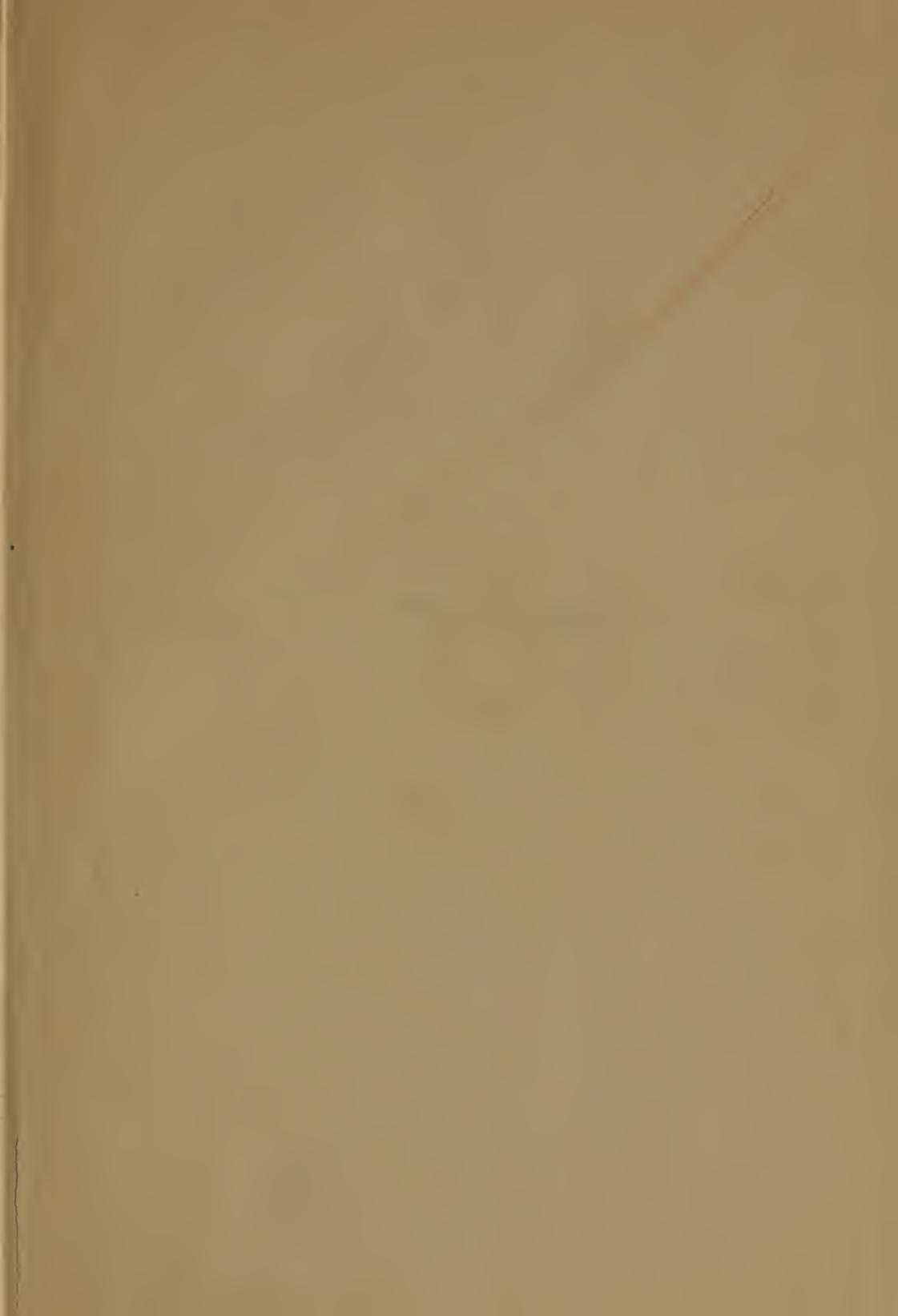
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A New Theory Concerning the Origin of the Miracle Play

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND
LITERATURE IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

(DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH)

BY

GEORGE RALEIGH COFFMAN

MENASHA, WIS.

The Collegiate Press

GEORGE BANTA PUBLISHING CO.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I, DEFINITION	I
CHAPTER II, ANALYSIS OF TRADITIONAL THEORIES	
The Theory of Evolution.....	9
The Farced Epistle Theory.....	13
The School Saints' Theory.....	17
CHAPTER III, THE MEDIAEVAL POINT OF VIEW	
Prefatory	24
The Cult of the Saints.....	25
Pilgrimages to Saints' Tombs.....	30
Festivals of Saints.....	32
Mediaeval Monasteries	37
The Mediaeval Renaissance.....	40
CHAPTER IV, ST. NICHOLAS AND HIS MIRACLE PLAYS	
The Cult of St. Nicholas.....	45
Significance of the Evidence.....	49
Origin of the Miracle Play.....	58
CHAPTER V, THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS, AND THE CON- VERSION OF ST. PAUL	
The Resurrection of Lazarus.....	67
The Conversion of St. Paul.....	70
CHAPTER VI, ST. CATHERINE AND HER PLAY.....	
SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE	79

PREFACE

It was my original plan in this problem relating to the early *Miracle Play*, (1) to make a critical inquiry into the various theories advanced concerning its origin, (2) to study the influences which led to the formation of saints' plays, (3) to reconstruct the lost St. Catherine play performed at Dunstable, England, before 1119, (4) to study the early St. Nicholas plays in relation to contemporary school plays, and (5) to examine later records and *Miracle Plays* in England to show that contrary to the statements of some historians of the drama the type persisted there and did not give its name to the cyclic and other religious plays. My study of the first of these propositions in relation to the second and third led me to reject the current theories and to propose in detail the one summarized in the closing pages of this dissertation. This resulted in a necessary subordination of the fourth and a complete exclusion of the fifth. These I expect to make subjects for further investigation. Dr. Weydig's dissertation, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Mirakelspiels in Frankreich*, necessitated my devoting an initial chapter to an analysis and rejection of his definition of *Miracle Play*, and to the establishing of another as the basis for my work.

In a word, the thesis of this dissertation is that circumstances and conditions of the eleventh century explain the origin of the *Miracle Play*, not only as to its type, but also as to its form and spirit. In this connection, I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor Joseph Bédier, whose studies on the origins of the Chanson de Geste (e. g., *Les Légendes Épiques*) have influenced very greatly my method of investigation, and whose thesis I have just now paraphrased to fit my particular problem. Professor Karl Young of the University of Wisconsin kindly read my dissertation last summer and gave many helpful suggestions. It is a pleasure also to express my thanks to Professor J. W. Thompson of the History Department of the University of Chicago for suggesting some of the material in the third chapter. To Professor Karl Pietsch of the Romance Department I am grateful for constant helpfulness relative to mediaeval materials. I am obliged to Professors C. R. Baskerville, A. H. Tolman, T. A. Knott, and R. M.

Lovett, and to my colleague, Professor G. F. Reynolds, for their kindness in reading my dissertation in manuscript. I appreciate too the co-operation of Miss Gettys of the University library, who secured for me books from other libraries. And finally I wish especially to thank Professor J. M. Manly for suggesting the study and thereby opening a rich field for further investigation, for the use of his books and unpublished notes, and for his invaluable criticism and unwearied encouragement; to Professors Manly and G. L. Kittredge I owe much for inspiring in me a love for the life and literature of the middle ages.

For the convenience of the reader I have added at the close a special index to bibliographical matter cited in the footnotes.

Missoula, Montana, December 15, 1914.

CHAPTER I. DEFINITION

In the present study I purpose to discuss the origin of the Miracle Play. At the outset I shall briefly define the type.¹

As a prefatory suggestion, an important fact to remember is that the type to be defined became a popular fashion in dramatic literature during the middle ages. Hence one must guard against considering as the type special plays which are included within it. It is essential, further, in defining this term to make a clear and logical distinction between *miracle* (Lat. *miraculum*, Fr. *miracle*) referring only to the content of mediaeval literary productions, and *miracle* referring to the dramatic form as well as to the content.

In a recent dissertation upon the history of the *Miracle Play* in France, Dr. Otto Weydig proposes a definition which demands our attention, for it illustrates the failure to observe the principles just stated. The definition which he proposes is as follows: The *Miracle Play* is the dramatic development of a general, human event whose tragic conflict is brought to a solution through the divine appearance and miraculous intervention of a saint².

A limitation which he makes to certain particular saints will be mentioned and considered a little later. The method by which he arrives at his definition is that of collecting illustrations of the use of the word *miracle* in connection with the presentation of mediaeval plays, and giving an uncritical interpretation to these examples. An analysis of his citations will make this clear.

The first example which he gives us is from the Fleury group of St. Nicholas plays. It is in the opening sentence of the argument preceding the third play, and reads thus: "Aliud miraculum de sancto Nicolao et quodam Judaeo, etc."³

¹ Historians of the drama have confused greatly the actual use of this term in England down to the Elizabethan period. A critical inquiry into such usage is much needed, but is aside from the purpose of this dissertation. However, I hope soon to complete and publish such a study.

² *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Mirakelspiels in Frankreich. Das Niklausmirakel* (Jena Diss., Erfurt, 1910), pp. 9-10: "Das Mirakelspiel ist die dramatische Entwicklung einer allgemein Begebenheit, deren tragischer Konflikt durch das meist überirdische Erscheinen eines Heiligen (resp. der Jungfrau Maria) und dessen Eingreifen zur Lösung gebracht wird."

³ E. Du Méril, *Les Origines Latines du Théâtre Moderne* (1897), p. 286, note.¹

Dr. Weydig⁴ cites this as an early and definite reference to *miracle*, meaning dramatic form. But compare with his illustration the following from the table of contents in the *Legendarium Auctum*, relative to the life of St. Nicholas: "Miraculum de Adeodato puerō," "Miraculum de vase aureo,"⁵ or with this from the catalogue of saints' material in manuscripts in the Ambrosian library: "De beato Nicholao miracula",⁶ or with this, relative to St. Catherine, taken from a similar catalogue of the Brussels royal library: "Aliud miraculum de reliquiis beatae Katherinae in mare projectis sed per angelum collectis."⁷

Now no one would think of arguing that these are references to *miracle plays*, yet they are of exactly the same kind as Dr. Weydig's example. The word *miracle* in all these cases indicates, not the type or dramatic form, but only the content of the matter.

Dr. Weydig's second example is as far from the point as the first; and his interpretation is fully as uncritical. He calls attention to Jean Bodel's use of the word *miracle* in his prologue to "Li Jeus de S. Nicolai" (vv. 108-111):

"Car canques vous nous verres faire
Sera essamples sans douter
Del miracle repreresenter
Ensi con je devise l'ai."

He regards this as showing that, although Jean Bodel called his drama "Li Jeus de S. Nicolai," "jeus" was employed only in the sense "par personnages," while the actual title was *miracle*.⁸

⁴See Wedig, p. 4.

⁵*Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. XVII (1898), p. 209. In this and the following cases, examples could be multiplied almost indefinitely.

⁶Ibid., XII (1892), p. 352.

⁷*Catal. Codd. Hagiog. Bibl. Reg. Bruxel.* (1886), p. 166. Take also the use of the word *miracle* in the farced epistle for the feast of St. Stephen (Du Méril, *op. cit.*, p. 411):

Saint Esteinvres pleins de bonté
.....
.....
einz a la peuple doctriné
et par miracles demontré
coment il vienge a sauveté.

⁸*Op. cit.*, p. 8.

Here, again, critical analysis shows that the important and characterizing word, which refers to the dramatic form, is not *miracle* but *representer*. This becomes evident if one compares it with the verbs *lirre*, *chantier*, and *reciter* in a passage, similar in significance, from Wace's life of St. Nicholas. They occur at the close of Wace's account of the miracle in which St. Nicholas restores to life three scholars murdered by an inn-keeper (vv. 226-229):⁹

"Por ceo que as clers fist tel honor
Font li cleric feste a icel jor,
De bien lirre, de bien chantier
E des miracles recitier."

Thus *miracle* in Jean Bodel, as well as in Wace, refers, not to the dramatic form of the entertainment, but to the superhuman act of St. Nicholas.¹⁰

The next two examples which I take from Dr. Weydig are like in kind to those just given, the principal difference being

⁹ *La Vie de Saint Nicholas*, ed., Dr. N. Delius, (Bonn, 1850).

¹⁰ A notable error of the same kind as this one which Dr. Weydig makes, occurs in Creizenach's interpretation of the word *miraculorum* in an extract from the Lichfield statutes (*Lichfield Statutes of Hugh de Nonant, 1188-1198*; quoted by E. K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage* (1903), Vol. II, p. 377): "Item in nocte Natalis representacio pastorum fieri consuevit et in diluculo Paschae representacio Resurreccionis dominicae et representacio peregrinorum die lunae in septimana Paschae sicut in libris super hijs ac alijs compositis continetur. . . . De officio succentoris et providere debet quod representacio pastorum in nocte Natalis domini et miraculorum in nocte Paschae et die lunae in Pascha congrue et honorifice fiant." Professor Creizenach (*Geschichte des neueren Dramas* (1911), Vol. I, p. 159) in a footnote to the following, cites this as a case of loose usage: "Im übrigen müssen wir, wenn in den Quellen von Mirakelspielen die Rede ist, uns stets daran erinnern, dass im mittelalterlichen Sprachgebrauch die dramatischen Gattungsbegriffe nicht streng auseinandergehalten werden." On the contrary, the word *miraculorum* as employed here is not at all a case of loose usage. The correct interpretation is, as Professor Manly has suggested to me, that the term applied to the dramatic presentation is not *miraculorum* but *representacio*. Thus there is a "representacio pastorum. . . . peregrinorum. . . . miraculorum." *Miraculorum* here refers to the marvels or miraculous events which formed the subject matter of the play. E. K. Chambers, also, (II, 104 footnote) cites this as standing for "representacio", but misquotes. His text reads "miraculum in nocte Paschae" instead of "miraculorum etc."

that they are chronologically later. The former of the two, the opening words of Rustebeuf's play, *Theophile*, reads "Ci commence le miracle de *Theophile*;" and the latter, the heading over each of the Miracles de Notre Dame of the fourteenth century, runs "Cy commence un miracle de Notre Dame."¹¹

These he regards as indicating a distinct and independent type of drama. Obviously, they do nothing of the sort. The references are to the content and not to the dramatic form of the plays. As an illustration of this same usage, take the title of a thirteenth century group of narrative miracles de Notre Dame de Chartres written by a Jehan le Marchant. It reads, "Ci commencent les miracles Nostre Dame¹² quel fit par siglise de Chartres feire."

In fact, the "Ci commence un miracle" is merely a translation of the conventional title to the mediaeval Latin narrative miracle, "(Hic) incipit miraculum etc." A case in point is "Incipit miraculum de adolescente quem sancta virgo Maria de inferno liberavit."¹³

The only instance which Dr. Weydig cites of usage in the fifteenth century relating to the drama is an extract from the statutes of the church of Toul, France, which reads "Fiunt ibi moralitates vel simulacra miraculorum cum farcis."¹⁴

In this case the dramatic type under consideration is not *miracle* but *morality*; and an explanation of the representations included in this type is *simulacula miraculorum*, i. e. imitations, not of *Miracle Plays* but of marvels or miraculous events.¹⁵

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 8.

¹² *Le Livre des miracles de Notre Dame de Chartres*, écrit en vers au XIII^e siècle par Jehan le Marchant, publié par M. G. Duplessis. (Chartres, 1855).

¹³ A. Mussafia, *Ueber die von Gautier de Coincy benützten Quellen* (*Denkschriften der königl. Akad. der Wissenschaft in Wien*, phil-hist. Classe [1894], XLIV, p. 17). Further examples of the use of *incipit* in this same general sense are "Incipit relatio de miraculis eiusdem prothomartyris (St. Stephen)" (*Cat. Codd. Hagiog. Bibl. Reg. Brux.*, I, p. 75), "Incipit vita Sancti Florini confessoris" (*ibid.*, I, p. 122), "Item alia incipit relatio de translatione Sancti Albani martyris" (*ibid.*, I, p. 199). Professor Manly tells me that this convention is almost universal.

¹⁴ From E. Du Méril (*op. cit.*), p. 59, footnote. See Weydig, p. 10.

¹⁵ That Du Cange (*Glossarium ad Scriptores Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis*, ed. 1885, II, p. 515) regards this as the interpretation is shown by his

Thus in all Dr. Weydig's material which we have analyzed *miracle* refers only to the content of the literary productions mentioned.

But there are in mediaeval records two references to the *Miracle Play* as a dramatic type. These make clear what the technique is and afford a sound basis for a working definition. One of the two is the remaining example employed by Dr. Weydig; it is a reference to a lost St. Catherine play performed at Dunstable, England, about 1100. To secure logical division in my analysis I have purposely avoided considering this reference earlier. Before taking it up, I quote, as pertinent in this discussion, Dr. Weydig's limitation of *Miracle Play* to certain, particular saints. It runs as follows: "As saints only St. Nicholas and the Virgin Mary come actively into consideration."¹⁶

Dr. Weydig's reference is the well-known one from Matthew Paris,¹⁷ a monk of St. Albans, England, who about 1240 wrote, and compiled from the work of preceding historians, a history of his monastery. The information of immediate importance to us in the passage quoted below is that Geoffrey, while a schoolmaster at

definition glossed under *moralitas*: "Actio scenica informandis moribus destinata, ut putabant; quamquam in ea sacra mysteria sanctorumque facta ridicule agerent, nostris moralite." Then as an illustration, follows the passage in question: "Vide. . . . infra in Pius 2. Stat. mss. Eccl. Tull. an. 1497 fol. 67r: Fiunt ibi moralitates vel simulacra miraculorum cum farcis et similibus jocalis, semper tamen honestis."

¹⁶ Weydig, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

¹⁷ I insert the entire passage from Matthew Paris because the evidence which it contains is important, not only here, but elsewhere in our study. *Vitae Abbatum St. Albani* (London, 1684), p. 1007. "Iste (Gaufridus) de Caenomania unde oriundus erat, venit vocatus ab Abbe Richardo, dum adhuc saecularis esset (This Geoffrey was Abbot of St. Albans from 1119 to 1146), ut scholam apud Sanctum Albanum regeret. Et cum venisset, concessa fuit schola alio Magistro, quia non venit tempestive. Legit igitur apud Dunestapliam expectans scholam Sancti Albani sibi repromissam, ubi quendam ludum de Sancta Katerina (quem miracula vulgariter appellamus) fecit. Ad quae decoranda, petiit a sacrista Sancti Albani, ut sibi Cape Chorales accommodarentur, & obtinuit. Et fuit ludus ille de Sancta Katherina. Casu igitur nocte sequenti, accensa est domus magistri Gaufridi, & combusta est domus cum libris suis, & Capis memoratis. Nesciens igitur quomodo hoc damnum Deo & Sancto Albano restauraret, seipsum reddidit in holocaustum

Dunstable, made (*fecit*) and had presented a play of St. Catherine of the type of drama commonly known about 1240 as "miracula." Though Dr. Weydig in his second chapter expresses doubt as to whether or not we have here to do with an actual *Miracle Play*, we nevertheless have the evidence before us for examination and analysis. This evidence contains three facts significant for us in connection with Weydig's definition: first we have a reference to a *type* of drama known as "miracula," not merely to an *individual play*; second, the saint who is honored in this dramatization is other than St. Nicholas or the Virgin Mary; and third, the play, beyond a reasonable doubt, represented not the divine appearance or miraculous intervention of a saint, but either the disputation of Catherine before the Emperor Maximinius with the philosophers, or her passion—or possibly included both.¹⁸

Thus, as a result of this examination of Dr. Weydig's evidence we see that the only example which concerns the *Miracle Play* as a type rather than the content of individual plays absolutely fails to justify his definition. That the miracles of St. Nicholas had much to do with fixing the name of this type of drama is very probably true, but that is another thing from saying that his miracles and those of the Virgin Mary constitute the type.¹⁹

The other reference which I suggested above is also well known. It is to the passage from William Fitz-Stephen's in-

Deo, assumens habitum Religionis in domo Sancti Albani. Et haec fuit causa, quare tantum adhibuit diligentiae, ut Capas chorales in eadem, postea in Abbatem promotus, faceret pretiosas."

¹⁸ For the evidence by which I reach this conclusion I refer the reader to my chapter, *St. Catherine and her Play*.

¹⁹ Subject to the same general criticism as Dr. Weydig's is the following definition by L. Petit de Julleville, *Les Mystères* (1880), I, p. 107: "On appelait miracle, au moyen âge, le récit de quelque fait surnaturel attribué à la Vierge ou aux Saints. Quand la narration, se transformant était mise en drame, comme c'est ici le cas (he is writing concerning Rustebeuf's *Theophile*)¹ le drame conservait le même nom."

Fully as arbitrary as Weydig's is Professor Wilh. Cloetta's *Sonntagsbeilage zur Vossischen Zeitung*, July 21, 1895, pp. 9-12: "Sie (die Mirakel) führen immer ein einziges Wunder vor, das von der betreffenden heiligen Person zur Zeit, als sie nicht mehr auf Erden wollte, verrichtet worden ist".

troduction to the life of Thomas à Becket,²⁰ consisting of a brief survey of London (c. 1190). In this, as the reader will recall, he writes of the plays of London, contrasting them with those of ancient Rome. He states that London has in place of theatrical spectacles, in place of scenic plays, more sacred plays, representations of miracles which holy confessors have wrought, or representations of passions by which the constancy of martyrs has become renowned. Here we have as a dramatic type, saints' plays: the two main groups of it are, representations of miracles, and representations of martyrdoms. Into the second group falls the St. Catherine play, a *Miracle Play*. On the basis of the evidence here presented relative to dramatic form, I propose the following definition as already phrased by another:²¹ "The miracle play is the dramatization of a legend setting forth the life or the martyrdom or the miracles of a saint." The final evidence for the establishing of this definition will be found in later chapters.

²⁰ *Vita Sancti Thomae Cantauriensis Archiepiscopi et Martyris*. See *Materials for the History of Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury* (Rolls Series, 1877), Vol. III, p. 9.: "Lundonia pro spectaculis theatralibus, pro ludis scenicis ludos habet sanctiores, repraesentationes miraculorum quae sancti confessores operati sunt, seu repraesentationes passionum quibus claruit constantia martyrium".

²¹ See J. M. Manly, *Mod. Phil.* IV (1906-1907), p. 585. A similar but more general wording of this definition is given by A. W. Ward, *Hist. Eng. Dram. Lit.* (1899), I, pp. 41-42: "Properly speaking, mysteries deal with Gospel events only. . . . Miracle-plays, on the other hand, are more especially concerned with incidents derived from the legends of the Saints of the Church."

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS OF TRADITIONAL THEORIES

The earliest *Miracle Plays*, according to the records, are those of St. Nicholas and St. Catherine. Of St. Nicholas¹ there are preserved eight plays in four different manuscripts. According to internal and external evidence none of these plays is later than the middle of the twelfth century. The two accepted as the earliest are preserved in an eleventh century manuscript from Hildesheim (Prussia).² One of these is a dramatized version of the well-known legend in which St. Nicholas gave dowries to three sisters who were considering entering upon lives of shame to save their father from want. The other has as its theme the miraculous intervention of the saint in restoring to life three young scholars who had been murdered by an innkeeper at whose house they were stopping over night. An Einsiedeln³ (Switzerland) manuscript of the early twelfth century contains a dramatized fragment of the latter part of this same legend. The part preserved opens with the appearance of St. Nicholas at the home of the innkeeper. In a Fleury (France) manuscript of the thirteenth century are four complete plays which have this saint as their hero.⁴ The subjects of two are the same as of those just mentioned. The third is of a Jew who entrusted his property to an image of St. Nicholas, which he had left to guard his house. Later when he returned and found that the robbers had stolen his goods, he

¹ This does not include some later St. Nicholas plays outside the limits of the present study.

² British Museum, Additional Ms. 22414. Text with introduction and notes by Ernst Dümmler *Zeitschr. f. deut. Alt.*, Vol. XXXV (1891), pp. 401-407. Further discussion by Ernst Dümmler and E. Schröder, *ibid.*, XXXVI (1892), pp. 238-240. See also Weydig, *op. cit.*, pp. 53 ff. for discussion of the eight plays.

³ *Einsiedeln Hs. Nr. 347*. Text with introduction by P. Gall Morel, *Anzeiger f. Kunde d. deutschen Vorzeit*, VI, Neue Folge (1859), cols. 207-210.

⁴ *Bibliothèque d'Orléans No. 201* (olim 178). Texts: E. de Coussemaker, *Drames Liturgiques* (1861) pp. 83-142; E. Du Méril, *op. cit.*, pp. 254-271, 276-284; Thomas Wright, *Early Mysteries* (1838), pp. 1-21. The date of the manuscript as indicated above is, of course, not to be understood as the date of the plays.

threatened to beat the image, but St. Nicholas intervened and forced the robbers to return the property. As a sequel the Jew became a Christian. The fourth *miracle* represents how St. Nicholas brought back to Getron and Euphrosina their son, Adeodatus, who had been kidnaped by a pagan king, Marmorinus. The last play of this group of eight was written by a scholar named Hilarius⁵ and treats the same theme as the third Fleury *miracle*. In this play a Barbarian takes the place of the Fleury Jew. With regard to the St. Catherine play, I have already stated that we have only a chance reference to it.⁶ Its latest possible date is 1119, the time at which Geoffrey, its author or manager, became abbot of St. Albans; and it is most probably several years earlier.

Waiving for the moment the unsettled question of whether or not this period produced other *Miracle Plays* than those just indicated, we turn to the actual question at issue. It is one of historical fact: What is the origin of this type of play? The question involves not a discussion of what might have happened, but of what did happen. We are concerned with theories only in so far as they serve as a starting point for investigation.

THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

A great fallacy in the discussion of the origin of the *Miracle Play* is that there has been too much mere speculation based on a loose and dangerous argument by analogy. One of the clearest cases of such speculation is Richard Garnett's statement of his theory. He writes thus: "This (the revival of the mediaeval drama in the *Miracle Play*) must be sought in the dramatic character assumed by the services of the Church as a consequence of their language having become unintelligible to the bulk of the people. . . .

"It was not that dramas were expressly composed for liturgical purposes, but that germs already present in the ritual developed into the dramatic representations. At last the religious drama went

⁵The period of Hilarius' literary activity is probably the second quarter of the twelfth century. This conclusion is based on the fact that he was a student under Abelard while the latter taught at Paraclete (c. 1125). For further comments on Hilarius, see Chapter III, p. 41, and *Hilarii Versus et Ludi* (1838), pp. 34 ff. ed. Champollion-Figeac; E. Du Méril, *op. cit.*, pp. 272-276.

⁶See Chapter I, p. 5, and footnote.

forth from the church into the open air as an offshoot of the liturgy, a kindred yet independent form of service. By a further important, yet highly natural development, it was allowed to be expressed in vernacular The evolutionary process was slow, and is to us obscure, but on the whole it may be concluded that the mystery or miracle play was an accepted institution in Central Europe toward the end of the eleventh century."⁷ Now it is not my purpose to discuss the drama whose origins "must be sought in the dramatic character assumed by the services of the Church." That is not the subject of my proposed study. Furthermore, the work has already been clearly and convincingly done.⁸ But in this connection, the following needs to be said. Though the *Miracle Play* may show certain *liturgical associations* in common with the early religious plays, there is absolutely no evidence that the *early liturgical play* ever developed from a "germ" as "an offshoot of the liturgy" into the *Miracle Play*. Not only is there no evidence in favor of this hypothesis, but all the evidence is directly opposed to it. This we shall present in its order in due time. Further, as I have already shown by the testimony of William Fitz-Stephen and Matthew Paris, the *Miracle Play* as a type of drama is clearly distinguishable. In this respect Garnett has entirely disregarded any distinctions. The fallacy involved in his theory I suggested in my remarks preceding his statement of the case. It is summed up in his closing sentence: "The evolutionary process was slow and is to us obscure."

The logical objection to this point of view was well put some years ago: "We know that literature and art and social life are not plants or animals, and that they have their own laws of existence, but even if we try to keep steadily before us the fallacy residing in such terms as 'organism' or 'evolution' it is practically impossible to speak or think of any unified body of facts showing progressive change as men habitually spoke and thought before 1860. That we

⁷Richard Garnett and Edmund Gosse, *English Literature, an Illustrated Record* (1903), Vol. I, p. 221.

⁸See Carl Lange, *Die lateinischen Osterfeiern* (München, 1887); also E. K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage* (1903), Vol. II, pp. 167; and Wilh. Creizenach, *Geschichte des neueren Dramas* (1911), Vol. I, pp. 43 ff. For a brief and succinct statement including all the essential features see J. M. Manly, *Modern Philology*, Vol. IV, pp. 583-584.

should still speak and think as if the needs of human thought could be met by a mere chronological record is not to be wished; but it is equally undesirable that in our attempts to understand the processes of life we should accept for our own particular problem a formula whose only claim to attention is that it seems to solve another problem. That is what we have been doing, even when we were not conscious of it."⁹ The essential fact here is that literature is not an organism but a product and has no power within itself to reproduce. A product which meets popular approval becomes a fashion, and thus a new type is established. Its origin is the result of some new factors, of forces within the period in which it first makes its appearance. All this preceding is the reason that arguments merely on the basis of biological analogy will never explain the origin of the *Miracle Play*.

The theory proposed by Professor A. W. Ward is in some respects similar in character to the one just discussed. Thus, he writes with regard to the dramatic development in the twelfth century: "From the same period survive divers dramatic versions of legends concerning the popular St. Nicholas, which savor of the monastic literary drama, and thus bear witness to the fluidity of a growth of which it is easier to detach the successive steps from one another in accordance with *a priori* theory than to arrange the sequence in proved chronological order."¹⁰ Just what he means by "monastic literary drama," and what relation he has in mind is shown clearly by another statement which he makes some years later: "While avowedly imitated in form from those of Terence those religious exercises (i. e. those of Hroswitha) derive their themes—martyrdoms and miraculous or otherwise startling conversions—from the legends of Christian saints. Thus from perhaps the ninth to the twelfth centuries, Germany and France, and through the latter by means of the Norman conquest, England became acquainted with what may be called the literary monastic drama. It was, no doubt, performed by the children under the care of monks or nuns or by the religious themselves: an exhibition of the former kind was the play of St. Catherine acted at Dunstable about the year 1110 in copies."¹¹

⁹ J. M. Manly, *loc. cit.*, p. 580.

¹⁰ A. W. Ward, *Hist. Eng. Dram. Lit.* (1899), Vol. I, p. 37.

¹¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, eleventh edition (1911), Vol. VIII, p. 417.

The theory here summarized presupposes two facts for which any conclusive evidence is lacking: that Hroswitha's plays were acted, and that they or successors to them passed through Germany and France to England. Professor Manly in a review of Joseph Tunison's *Dramatic Traditions in the Dark Ages* summarizes clearly the present state of opinion with regard to the first point and adds some pertinent comments relative to her dramatic art. He writes: "It is surely misleading to say (p. 167) that 'competent critics agree that her dramas could be acted as they were written.' Some have contended that they could. That Sapientia and Calimachus could, is hard to believe. The implication of page 167 is that Hroswitha's dramatic technique was excellent. Her 'correctness' consists, in fact, only in not interpolating such expressions as 'inquit' in the dialogue. She follows her legends almost slavishly and neglects most obvious opportunities for spectacular and dramatic effects; see her treatment of the comic situation in Dulcitius sc. IV, and compare in Gallicanus, I, ix, with I, xii, 7, and in Calimachus sc. vii with the report in ix, 13."¹² Then, too, Hroswitha tells us herself that she wrote her plays to be read.¹³ With regard to the second point, not only is there no indication of Hroswitha's influence¹⁴ on the miracle plays, but positive evidence reveals an entirely different origin and development.

¹² See *American Historical Review*, XIII (1907-1908) p. 125. Cf. P. S. Allen, *The Mediaeval Mimus, Mod. Phil.* VIII (1910), p. 25; "Roswitha's so-called dramas are of course nothing but *legends in crude dialogue-form*," and ff.

¹³ *Hrotsvithae Opera, recensuit et emendavit Paulus de Winterfeld* (Berlin, [1902], p. 106) Preface to plays: "Plures inveniuntur catholici, cuius nos penitus expurgare nequimus facti, qui pro cultioris facundia sermonis gentilium vanitatum librorum utilitati praeferunt sacrarum scripturarum. Sunt etiam alii, sacris inhaerentes paginis, qui licet alia gentilium spernant, Terentii tamen fingmenta frequentius lectitant, et, dum dulcedine sermonis delectantur, nefandarum notitia rerum maculantur. Unde ego, Clamor Validus Gandeshemensis, non recusavi illum imitari dictando, dum alii colunt legendō quo eodem dictationis genere, quo turpia lascivarum incesta feminarum recitabantur, laudabilis sacrarum castimonia virginum juxta mei facultatem ingenioli celebraretur".

¹⁴ As far as evidence is concerned one must regard Hroswitha's imitation of Terence as sporadic; she set no literary fashion. Her work was essentially that of a recluse. However, in employing Latin legends of saints, as she did, she was in harmony with the prevailing literary fashion of her period (ca. 940-1002). *Vide infra*, chap. iii, p. 34.

THE FARCED EPISTLE THEORY

Professor Suchier¹⁵ summarizes a theory which has had some currency among students of the drama. The following is a brief statement of it: The liturgical play, banished from the church because of secular or comic elements, found a halting place in the churchyard and the monastery. In the latter of these two places plays were performed in honor of school saints. An important impulse to this readjustment of the dramatic office, making it broader so as to include saints' material and saints' feasts as well as Biblical material and such liturgical feasts as Christmas and Easter, was the vernacular farced epistle. As an illustration of its influence take the vernacular refrains in Hilarius' two plays: *Lazarus* and *Nicholas*.

An analysis of this shows, as in the case of Garnett's theory, that there is a failure to distinguish between the earliest religious plays, which had their inspiration essentially within the liturgy, and *Miracle Plays*, which originated some two hundred years later under widely different circumstances and influences. Certain common liturgical associations should not cause us to confuse two distinct types. Suchier does indeed suggest a different origin, but

¹⁵ See H. Suchier und Adolph Birsch-Hirschfeld, *Geschichte der Französischen Litteratur von ältesten Zeiten*, etc. (1900), p. 273: "Das Eindringen weltlicher oder komischer Elemente, gab schon im 12. Jahrhundert Anlass, die Spiele aus der Kirche zu verbannen; doch verlegte man sie zunächst auf den Platz neben der Kirche. Seit dem Anfang des 12. Jahrhunderts werden auch in den Klosterschulen Aufführungen veranstaltet, besonders zu Ehren der Katharina, der Schutzpatronin der Gelehrsamkeit, und des Nicholaus des Schutzpatrons der Schüler.

"Die lateinische Sprache machte das Repertoire des Offiziums zu einem internationalen. Zunächst einfach an die Bibel angelehnt und auf die Hauptfeste beschränkt, dann auch auf Feste der Lokalheiligen bezogen, wurde das Offizium durch neue Arrangements an Ort, Zeit, und Publicum angepasst und allmählich erweitert—Ein wichtiger Anstoß zur Umgestaltung scheint von der sogenannten *épître farcie* ausgegangen zu sein. Das war ein Gesang in der Volkssprache, der durch die Vorlesung der Perikope stückweise unterbrochen wurde. Uns sind mehrere solcher *épîtres farcies* in französischer und provenzalischer Sprache erhalten; den ältesten auf Stephanus, glaubt man in den Anfang des 12. Jahrhunderts setzen zu dürfen. Die Einmischung französischer Stellen, die auch den des lateinischen unkundigen Teil Publikums zu seinem Rechte kommen liess, empfahl sich

he makes it refer to a new feature of the early religious play, and not to the creation of a new type. The theory, as the reader will observe, is that the vernacular farced epistle is really the origin of the *Miracle Play*. Since I shall have something to say later with regard to school saints, I pass them for the present. Relative to this theory three pertinent questions are: What is the farced epistle¹⁶ as the term is here employed? What is its purpose? What does the evidence show as to its relation to the *Miracle Play*?

The farced epistle, in the sense here employed is a vernacular interpolation in the passage from the legends of a saint which was read on that particular saint's day. Its purpose was to interpret in the language of the congregation the content of the Latin lection—with some additional popular exposition of it.¹⁷ To make this clear, take an extract from the farced epistle which Suchier mentions, the one for the feast of St. Stephen. It opens thus:

Seignors, oiez communement:
car entendre poez brefment
la passion et le torment
de saint Esteinvre apertement.

Lectio Actuum Apostolorum
Li Apostre ceste lecon
firent, par bone ententiu,
de sein Esteinvre, le baron.

In diebus illis,
Enpres le jur que Deus
fu nexce por nos,
fu enterdix posez,
fu saint Esteinvre lapidez.

auch für das Offizium, und so uns von Hilarius, dem Zuhörer des Abailard . . . drei lateinische Schauspiele erhalten ('Daniel', 'Lazarus', 'Nikolaus'), von denen die beiden letzteren lyrische Gesänge, man möchte sagen Arien, einschliessen, deren 2-4 Strophen mit französischen Refrains versehen sind." E. Du Méril, *op. cit.*, p. 74 note 2 suggests a similar influence: "Nous serions tenté aussi d'en (*épître farcie*) rapporter l'origine à des intentions dramatiques, et de voir une véritable liaison entre la farciture des épîtres et les farces."

¹⁶ Latin *farcire*, to stuff.

¹⁷ Cf. Suchier, *op. cit.*, "Das war ein Gesang, etc."

*Stephanus, plenus gratia et fortudine, faciebat prodigia et signa magna in populo.*¹⁸

Seint Esteinvres pleins de bonté
et de la grace damne Dé(u),
unc n'entendi a fausseté;
einz a le peuple doctriné,
et par miracles demontré
coment il vienge a sauveté.¹⁹

And thus the entire story of Stephen's martyrdom as recorded in the Acts of Apostles is given in this manner, with popular exposition. That this is a highly dramatic incident every one will admit, but it is not drama. Furthermore, we have neither drama nor any intermediate stages leading to it in this or any other vernacular farced epistles preserved. In the case of St. Nicholas, the saint whose plays are earliest, and therefore establish the type, we have no vernacular farced epistles. But even if we had, the Hildesheim plays, all of which are in Latin, show no trace of this influence.²⁰ But let us turn to the case cited by Suchier, the two plays by Hilarius. The only relation that they show to the farced epistle is that they have vernacular portions. By way of illustration and comparison, take an extract typical of this feature in both plays, one from *St. Nicholas*. It is after the robbers at the command of St. Nicholas have returned to the barbarian the stolen money. He approaches the image and says:

Suplex ad te venio,
Nicholax;
Nam per te recipio
Tut icei que tu gardas.

¹⁸ *Acts of Apostles*, Chap. VI, v. 8.

¹⁹ E. du Méril, *op. cit.*, pp. 410-411.

²⁰ Clemens Blume's masterly work on tropes to epistles (*Analecta Hymnica* [Leipzig, 1906], Vol. XLIX, pp. 167 ff.), to which Professor Karl Young has kindly called my attention, shows that though the vernacular tropes can hardly be dated back of the thirteenth century, there are tropes entirely in Latin as early as the eleventh century. However, Suchier's theory concerns itself entirely with the vernacular tropes. And further, there is no evidence that there is any essential relation between the Latin tropes and the *Miracle Play* in its origin.

Sum profectus peregre,
Nicholax;

Sed recepi integre
 Tut ice que tu gardas.

Mens mea convaluit,
Nicholax;

Nichil enim defuit
 De tut cei que tu gardas.²¹

Now even a hasty reading of this passage shows that the vernacular element here bears no logical relation to that in the passage quoted from the farced epistle. It is an integral part of the play—necessary to complete the meaning of the stanzas—and this exposition presents Suchier's²² idea of the purpose of the vernacular interpolation. It is evident that its real purpose here is entirely aesthetic. It is a refrain, adding to the lyric quality of the verse.

Exactly the same device with exactly the same end in view is employed again by Hilarius in two of his non-dramatic poems, *Ad Petrum Abaelardum*²³ and *De Papa Scholastico*.²⁴ I take three stanzas from the first for illustration. The poem as a whole is an appeal to Abelard to admit to his classes again Hilarius²⁵ and a number of his companions, dismissed presumably because of some students' prank reported to him by his servant. The three stanzas quoted are an invective against this servant.

"Lingua servi, nostrum discidium,
 In nos Petri commovit odium.
 Quae meretur ultorem gladium,
 Quia nostrum extinxit studium!

Tort a vers nos li mestre.

"Detestandus est ille rusticus,
 Per quem cessat a schola clericus:
 Gravis dolor! quod quidam puplicus

²¹ *Hilarii Versus et Ludi*, p. 38; Du Méril, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

²² Suchier, *op. cit.*, "Die Einmischung versehen sind."

²³ *Hilarii Versus et Ludi*, pp. 14-16.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

²⁵ *Hilarii*, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15. See also *Hist. Litt. de la France*, Vol. XII, p. 252.

Id effecit ut casset logicus!
Tort a vers nos li mestre.
 "Est dolendum quod lingua servuli,
 Magni nobis causa periculi,
 Susurravit in aurem creduli,
 Per quod ejus cessant discipuli.
Tort a vers nos li mestre."

Finally, a similar use of vernacular refrain in the *Daniel* of Beauvias,²⁶ a contemporary school play, and the *Sponsus*,²⁷ a contemporary liturgical play, gives some further support to the theory that this was a passing fashion, employed for lyric effect. At any rate, one thing is certain: this vernacular element in our drama has no genetic relation to the same feature in the farced epistle. And there is certainly no warrant for the contention that the vernacular farced epistle influenced the origin and development of the *Miracle Play*.

THE SCHOOL SAINTS' THEORY.

Another theory which has been suggested by several historians of the drama is that in its origin the *Miracle Play* is a dramatic representation in honor of the patron saints of scholars: Nicholas and Catherine. This is expressed definitely by Dr. Weydig²⁸ in his dissertation. In its essence his theory is as follows. Latin stories of the lives of saints were early employed as school exercises. Miracles of these saints, already in prose dialogue, may often have been changed into little poems and recited at a festivity. Then

²⁶ E. de Coussemaker, *op. cit.*, pp. 49 ff.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 1 ff.; E. Du Méril, *op. cit.*, pp. 233 ff.

²⁸ I add Dr. Weydig's statement entire because it represents current opinion. Of course due allowance must be made for personal views in detail with which others holding the theory would not agree. Weydig, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-46: "In den Schulen ist nun auch der Keim zum Nikolausspiel und damit zum Mirakelspiel überhaupt zu suchen. Die Bedingungen dafür waren hier am günstigsten. Denn zunächst war den Schülern eine genaue Kenntnis des Stoffes eigen, die sie teils aus lateinischen Erzählungen, teils aus mündlichen Überlieferungen für Übungen der Schüler verwendet, wie das üblich war. Man konnte an ihnen alles für die damalige Zeit Wichtige lernen: Latein, Verskunst, Religion, und man blieb dabei auf anschaulichem, realen Gebiete. So mögen die meist schon in ihrer Prosaform dialogisierten Wunder oft in

these dialogues, pressed beyond the boundaries, became verse and primitive drama. Thus we should have the scholars presenting—at first for themselves only—on the feast day of their patron, St. Nicholas, a little play concerning one of his miracles, the joint composition of two monks, one writing the text, the other, the music.

All this could have happened, but the question is, did it? Shall

kleine Gedichte verwandelt and dann bei Festlichkeit rezitiert worden sein, wie auch aus einer Stelle bei Wace, *La Vie de Saint Nicholas* v. 226 ff., hervorzugehen scheint (Delius S. 8) :

Por ceo que as cleris fist tel honor
Font li clerc feste a icel jor,
De bien lirre, de bien chantier
E des miracles recitier.

Die dialogische Form drängte sich oft schon aus der Quelle herein. So entstand einer jener kleinen Gedicht-Dialoge, wie sie in den beiden Hildesheimer Spielen, von denen gleich zu sprechen ist, erhalten sind, und in welcher Form auch die erste religiöse, dramatische Komposition Englands überliefert ist, betitelt 'The Harrowing of Hell.' Ausserdem waren Schülern der Dialog und das Spiel nicht unbekannt, denn sie wirkten ja meist bei der Aufführung der Spiele zu Weihnachten und Ostern mit. Warum hätten sie also, zunächst nur für sich, am Festtage ihres Schutzheiligen nicht auch ihm zu Ehren ein kleines Spiel über eins seiner Wunder aufführen sollen? Irgend ein junger Mönch oder Kleriker verfasste den wenig umfangreichen Text, ein anderer vielleicht ersann die Musik dazu, die sehr einfach war." For a more general statement of the theory see Creizenach, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 97: "Mit einem hohen Grade von Wahrscheinlichkeit dürfen wir aber solche Dramen (Klosteraufführungen) als Schuldramen aussprechen, in welchen ein Heiliger verherrlicht wird, der als Patron des Schulwesens galt. Gewiss ist es kein Zufall, dass Gottfried in Dunstable die heilige Katharina, die Patronin der Gelehrten, zur Helden seines Schauspiels erkör. Der Lieblingspatron der Schüler war aber der kinderfreundliche Nickolaus, dessen Gestalt uns in mehreren Spielen ehrfurchtgebietend, dabei mit einem leisen Schimmer von Humor entgegentritt." See also Creizenach in *The Cambridge History of Eng. Lit.* Vol. V, p. 42.

Although Chambers, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 57-59 is very guarded in his statements concerning the origin of the group including the St. Nicholas dramas, suggesting that they may have been composed on the model of the Easter and Christmas plays, he does connect them with scholastic influences without committing himself to any definite theory (p. 59): "Of Latin plays of St. Nicholas, indeed quite a little group exists; and the great scholastic feast evidently afforded an occasion, less only than Easter and Christmas, for dramatic performances." However, this statement is entirely general and noncommittal, and I call attention to it here not to class Chambers with the Weydig group, but merely to indicate his related point of view.

we regard this type as the result of an unconscious evolution within the schoolroom, and the happy inspiration²⁹ of a teacher who wished to provide a new entertainment for his schoolboys? My analysis of this theory may well be introduced by the query: What evidence is there in favor of it? In the first place, as answer, though I grant it probable that teachers employed for school exercises just such saints' legends as we find dramatized, there is in the passage quoted at length (see footnote²⁹) no conclusive evidence which warrants such a statement as: "Sicher haben die Lehrer solche Erzählungen für Übungen der Schüler verwendet."³⁰ *Wahrscheinlich* or *vielleicht*, and not *sicher* is the fitting adverb here. Then as an instance of prose legends already in dialogue Dr. Weydig gives in a footnote, citation to *Legenda Aurea*, which contains entire narratives in dialogue. When we recall that the *Legenda Aurea* was written almost two hundred years after our first *Miracle Plays*, we shall hardly regard the form which Jacobus de Voragine, its compiler, employed in some of its stories as proving anything for our case. Further, the lines quoted from Wace to the effect that scholars "read, sing, and recite" the miracles of St. Nicholas on his feast day because he saved three of their companions,³¹ were written probably half a century after the *Miracle Play* was created.³² So, though the time that elapsed from the Hildesheim dramas to Wace is not so great as between them and the *Legenda Aurea*, the fallacy in both cases is the same. And the theory of joint composition which Dr. Weydig presents is speculation justifiable only on the basis of some unquestioned evidence.

But there is one further point that demands our attention. I refer to Dr. Weydig's statement that in their origin the plays were performed in honor of St. Nicholas, the "Schutzheiligen" of scholars. And here I call in question what has heretofore been

²⁹ Of course the *Miracle Play* in its origin was the happy inspiration of some individual. The only question here is as to whether the view presented gives the significance and relations of the inspiration.

³⁰ In a footnote to this assertion Weydig cites Gröber (*Grundriss II. i*, p. 395) as of the opinion that some little poems concerning St. Martin were employed for school exercises.

³¹ *Vide supra*, footnote: Weydig 44-46.

³² Concerning Wace (b. ca. 1100, d. ca. 1174) see Louis N. Delmare, *Catholic Encyclopaedia* Vol. XV (1912), p. 521.

regarded as an absolute fact, viz., that St. Nicholas and St. Catherine were specialized as saints of scholars previous to the origin of the *Miracle Play*.³³ That they were patrons of scholars during the Middle Ages, and that their plays were performed in the schools there is no question. The question is, does the evidence show that they were specialized as patrons of the scholars at the time of the origin of the *Miracle Plays*? The statement so often cited in support of this theory is the well-known one from Bulaeus' *History of the University of Paris*. Under the date 1087, the year of the translation of the relics of St. Nicholas from Myra, Asia Minor to Bari, Italy, Bulaeus writes: "Ille (Nicholas) autem ab omni aevo scholarium Patronus habitus & praesertim Iuniorum qui humaniarum litterarum rudimentis & Grammaticae operam dant, ut S. Catharina philosophorum."³⁴ St. Nicholas and St. Catherine patrons of scholars and philosophers *ab omni aevo!* This last phrase is certainly inclusive enough. But a few facts must be taken into consideration before we accept Bulaeus as authority. We must remember, first, that he wrote in the latter half of the seventeenth century, several hundred years after the time that concerns us, and that he cites no evidence in support of his sweeping assertion. In this connection, an analysis of another passage from Bulaeus, quoted by almost every historian of the drama, is of greatest importance here in that it gives us an insight into his method of reaching conclusions. I refer to his comments regarding the play of St. Catherine. Here is a typical statement from one of the older histories of the English Drama:³⁵ "According to Bulaeus, this play of St. Katherine was not by any means a novelty *non novo quidem instituto sed consuetudine magistrorum et scholarum.*" Let us look to the context of this assertion of Bulaeus. Under the date 1146, the year of the death

³³ Though Weydig does not include St. Catherine in the passage quoted, since he regards her as unessential to his study of the *Miracle Play*, the following from his remarks concerning the St. Catherine play will show, I believe, that I am not misrepresenting him by including her in the argument (*op. cit.*, p. 13); "Bemerkenswert ist, dass dieses Drama des Gottfried die Heilige Katharina, die Patronin der Gelehrten, zur Heldenin hatte."

³⁴ C. E. Bulaeus, *Historia Universitatis Parisiensis*, (six vols. 1665-1673), Vol. I, p. 480.

³⁵ J. P. Collier, *English Dramatic Poetry* (1879), Vol. I, p. 14.

of Geoffrey, the author of the St. Catherine play, he writes: "1146. Eodem anno obierunt in Anglia plurimi viri insignes olim huiusce Academiae³⁶ magistri: inter alios vero Gaufridus Cenomanensis, vir in scholarum magisterio magni nominis hocce vero tempore Abbas S. Albani; qui scilicet e Cenomania ubi docebat evocatus in Angliam a Richardo Abbatte S. Albani ut Monasterii Scholas regeret, postea factus est ipse Abbas an. 1119. Abbatiamque rexit usque ad obitum. Ille autem in praedicto monasterio, aut certe in scholiis ejusdem S. Katharinae ludum seu miracula per Discipulos repraesentavit; non novo quide instituto, sed de consuetudine Magistrorum & Scholarum: qua de re sic Mathaeus Parisiensis, seu quiuis alias scriptor is vitis 23. Abbatum S. Albani, ubi de Gaufrido Abbatte. (Here follows the passage from Matthew Paris already quoted.³⁷ Vide supra footnote 17, page 5, chapter I) Ex his patet inter exercitationes iuventutis scholasticae fuisse iam tum Ludos, seu Comoedias & Tragoedias, quemadmodum usurpari ubique passim hodie videmus in colloquiis & Scholis Artistarum: quae consuetudo in Academia quoque Parisiensi vetustissima est, ut libro de Patronis 4. Nationum a nobis edito an. 1662 docuimus."

This is Bulaeus complete. From the solitary reference of Matthew Paris' he concludes that *Miracle Plays* were a well-established custom among teachers and scholars when Geoffrey was teaching at Dunstable: "Non novo quidem instituto sed de consuetudine magistrorum et scholarum." Surely not a convincing method. The reader will observe that it is not here a question of whether they were a well-established custom, but of whether he advances any conclusive evidence to show that they were.

And if we accept Rashdall's³⁸ estimate of Bulaeus' entire work on the history of the University of Paris, we must believe that the case cited is not an unusual one. He writes: "Caesar Egassius Bulaeus (du Boulay) in his six enormous folio volumes gathered together an immense mass of material for his history, but his own view of its origin is as completely mythical as anything in

³⁶ The University of Paris.

³⁷ Bulaeus, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 225-226.

³⁸ Hastings Rashdall, *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* (1895). See bibliographical note to Vol. I, p. 271.

the first decade of Livy;^{38a} while his inaccuracies and inconsistencies are only equalled by his tedious prolixity. He was perhaps the stupidest man that ever wrote a valuable book." So much for Rashdall. At all events, if we apply a critical test to Bulaeus, we must cease to quote him as authority in matters relative to the drama or patron saints of scholars.

Doubtless the scholars' legend has occurred to some as evidence in favor of regarding St. Nicholas as a patron of scholars before the origin of the *Miracle Play*. But its earliest appearance seems to have been in the Hildesheim drama. And apparently the first life of St. Nicholas³⁹ that contains it is by Wace, written, as I have already stated, some forty or fifty years after the probable date of the Hildesheim Play. Further, Wace distinctly states that this miracle is the cause of his being honored by students:

"Por ceo que as cleris fist tiel honor
Font li cleric feste a icel jor."

Hence, though we may regard the drama as marking the approximate time at which St. Nicholas became a patron of scholars, we should avoid forming the conclusion on the basis of the scholars' legend⁴⁰ that the *Miracle Play* originated in honor of him or of other saints as patrons of scholars; for, as we shall see later, the origin of the *Miracle Play* constitutes a problem distinct from it. We should bear in mind, also, in this connection, that three of the four themes dramatized concerning St. Nicholas have nothing to do with his relation to scholars. Finally, *Monumenta Germaniae*

^{38a} This certainly does not speak well for the "vetustissima consuetudo" regarding the plays at the University of Paris as far as our question of origins is concerned.

³⁹ For concise summary of incidents contained in early lives see appendix to Kurt K. Rud. Bohnstedt's *La Vie Saint Nicholas, altfr. Gedicht* (Diss. Erlangen, 1897), pp. 34-44; and especially p. 38 with reference to the scholars' legend. For a life of St. Nicholas (written probably between 965 and 989) not mentioned by Bohnstedt see *Anal. Bolland.*, Vol. II. (1883), pp. 143-151. This does not include the scholars' legend. The earliest hymn which I have found that includes it is of the twelfth century (see *Analecta Hymnica*, XXI [1895], p. 85).

⁴⁰ For my suggested theory concerning the origin of the scholars' legend *vide infra*, chap. IV, p. 66, footnote.

Historica Scriptorum, with its numerous early references⁴¹ to St. Nicholas and its few to St. Catherine, contains none to them as patrons of scholars. Thus the theory regarding St. Nicholas and St. Catherine as specialized saints of scholars previous to the origin of the *Miracle Play*, when it is beaten into the clear, stands defenseless.

But with regard to Dr. Weydig's theory of origins, we shall be able to show, I think, in what follows that these plays in relation to their period have a far greater significance than one finds in considering them merely as a casual holiday pastime for schoolboys. Dr. Weydig himself suggests the right method of arriving at the correct solution of this problem, though he utterly ignores it in his dissertation. In the opening sentence of his first chapter he states that in forming the definition of *Miracle Play* we have gone back too little to the point of view of the times out of which it arose.⁴² This is exactly the difficulty. Now the method by which we may approximate the desired point of view demands the following procedure:

- (1) A survey of the times in which the *Miracle Play* originated, to discover what influences help to explain its origin.
- (2) A careful examination of contemporary documents for the purpose of discovering and interpreting new material and making, where necessary, fresh interpretation of material already employed.
- (3) An analysis of the relation between the dramas already accepted as *Miracle Plays* and some of the other contemporary dramatic representations.

⁴¹ By early I mean the period reaching to the first quarter of the twelfth century.

⁴² Weydig, *op. cit.*, p. 7: "Bei der Bestimmung des Mirakelspiels ist man meines Erachtens zu wenig auf die Anschauung der Zeiten zurückgegangen, aus denen es stammt. "The opening sentence of chapter two reads (p. 12): "Bei der Zusammenstellung des Materials für diese Übersicht war zunächst die ganze Literatur des mittelalterlichen Theaters durchzusehen, besonders die des 15. Jahrhunderts." The closing words, "besonders die des 15. Jahrhunderts," give us exactly his point of view and the clue to his failure. His eyes are on the fifteenth century, when the *miracles de Notre Dame* are the important feature, and not on the eleventh century, when the *Miracle Play* had its origin.

CHAPTER III.
THE MEDIAEVAL POINT OF VIEW
PREFATORY

It is generally recognized that the reproduction of mediaeval life presented in literature during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by such romanticists as Scott and the Pre-Raphaelites is false. For our purpose, also, the point of view presented by such mediaeval productions as the *Chanson de Roland*, the *Roman de la Rose*, and the *Chronicles* of Villehardouin, Joinville and Froissart is misleading; for they represent primarily the idealized and artificial aspects of the periods in which they were written. In this problem of dramatic origins the important factor for us is the every day life of the people of the Middle Ages. Here, at the beginning of this chapter on the mediaeval point of view, two significant facts should be emphasized: first, the people of the Middle Ages, in their ways of thinking, were confused, and were hindered from clear perceptions by defects which were a part of their social order; and second, they were essentially practical, their motives were primarily utilitarian.

At the close of the last chapter, I stated that the *Miracle Play* in its beginnings had an essential relation to its period, which Dr. Weydig fails entirely to comprehend in his theory of a casual origin for it. It is the purpose of this chapter and the following ones to show that our type of drama really has that essential relation already suggested, and that the influences of which it is the logical result are primarily those of the eleventh century. The following is a brief statement of my plan of work:

1. First, I shall show relative to the mediaeval point of view: (1) that the saints sustained a vital relation to the people and that the honoring of them was adapted to the spirit of the times; (2) that the significance of the mediaeval monastery consisted in its corporate entity; and (3) that the age was one of unecclesiastical influences.

2. Further, I shall show, on the basis of evidence relating to St. Nicholas, that his *miracle plays* are not fortuitous, but in form and spirit bear an essential relation to the features just mentioned.

3. Then, I shall show, relative to the type, that other contemporary *Miracle Plays*, not yet recognized as such, support the evidence presented in the case of the St. Nicholas plays.

4. Finally, I shall show, in connection with my study of St. Catherine and her play, that the evidence presented there harmonizes with that previously given.

In the present chapter I shall treat only the first of the main divisions just indicated.

THE CULT OF THE SAINTS.

The first question in order is, exactly what was the relation of the cult of the saints to the people in mediaeval times? As a preface to a direct answer, a historical résumé¹ of the cult is essential. Of course, in its origin it has a vital connection with the Christian religion; but during the first two centuries after Christ there was no idea of the cult: all worship was to the glory of the Saviour: a celebration of his miracles and an extolling of his promises. The beginnings of the cult of the saints are to be sought in the cult of the martyrs. To possess the crown of martyrdom was for this epoch of faith the desire of the most simple and enthusiastic of men. They wished to live again in Christ. And the wishes of large numbers were gratified through the persecutions of the early emperors. The martyrdom of these heroes made a profound impression upon the faithful; and they could not forget them. Moreover, the leaders proposed them for models. Soon the faithful each year celebrated the anniversaries of martyrs and rejoiced in their happy birth in Christ. No churches were yet raised to them on or near their tombs, which the faithful visited only on the day of the anniversary. That represents a later development. But the cult was born; the Christian people prayed for the martyrs and bore them oblations for the safety of their souls.²

¹ In the historical résumé which follows I am largely indebted to A. Marignan's valuable study, *Le Culte des Saints sous les Mérovingiens* (*Etudes sur la civilisation Francaise*, Tome Deuxième, Paris, 1899), *Le Saint*, pp. 1-31. See also Dr. Holentin Thalhofer, *Handbuch der Katholischen Liturgik*, zweite Auflage (Freiburg, 1912), Vol. I, pp. 693-700; Dr. K. A. H. Kellner, *Heortologie* (Freiburg, 1906), pp. 151 ff.; J. Baudot, *Le Martyrologe* (Paris, 1911), pp. 1-12.

² Marignan, *op. cit.*, p. 7 ("Les Calendiers, à partir du quatrième siècle, indiquent avec soin la fête du martyr et le nom du cimetière où il repose") and Kellner, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-154 give evidence relative to the activity of popes and bishops in this respect during the third century.

Then with the popular movement into the church during the third century the cult increased and the bishops counseled the believers to note exactly the anniversary of martyrs. Calendars were drawn up to keep a record of those who died in the faith. Each large community preserved such a calendar of martyrs.³ The next step was the transformation of the Christian religion. The new converts came to regard these martyrs as divine intercessors for them before God and Christ. In its turn arose the conception that martyrdom gave to the one who endured it a supernatural virtue. After that, everything which the martyr had touched was collected with care and became a precious talisman for the faithful. Thus came into existence the cult of the relics.

It was at this period that the doctrine of Christ penetrated more and more into the Occident, and that evangelization progressed rapidly but superficially. It was necessary that the converts find in the Christian sanctuary that which paganism had given them: protection from the destructive forces in nature and the support of the Divinity in their times of trouble. The popular conception of the martyrs gave these converts the assurance of such divine inter mediators as they had found in their gods. The crowds flocked to the suburban cemeteries of Rome to celebrate the anniversaries of Christian heroes at their tombs and to implore their aid. So great did these crowds become that churches were erected beside the cemeteries to accommodate them. "In the liturgies, prayers for the saints were now displaced by invocations for their intercessions. In this the people found a compensation for the loss of hero, genius and *manes* worship."⁴

But the cult of martyrs is only the first step toward the cult of the saints. In the fourth century, with the triumph of the Church, martyrdom became rare. Soon there were added to the cult ascetic monks, who passed their lives in continued internal struggle. These came to be known through the ascetic literature of the fourth century. After this there came to be included as

³ Kellner, *op. cit.*, p. 153: "Jede grössere Gemeinde, vorab die Patriarchalkirchen, erhielten ihren Heiligenkalender, der sich im Laufe der Zeit mehr und mehr mit Namen füllte."

⁴ Professor J. H. Kurtz, *Church History* (Eng. tr. by Rev. John Macpherson [1888]), Vol. I, p. 361.

saints, bishops of exemplary life—men who had rendered themselves dear to the people by their almsgiving and other acts of helpfulness.⁵ Miracles proved their supernatural power. Thus all these—martyrs, ascetics, and holy confessors—came early to form the cult of the saints.⁶ And by the Merovingian epoch there was a fixed popular conception concerning them. At the celestial court they surrounded the thrones of God and Christ, discussing before them the demands of mortals and pleading their cause. They spoke without ceasing in favor of the inhabitants where their cult was honored and prayed God to spare the faithful who addressed prayers and presented gifts to them. It was the saints who watched over men, guided and counseled them. Above all the saint was a protector of the individual or community that honored him. During this early period the cult of the saint was entirely local. Relics were taken by worshippers, but the saint's power was primarily where his body reposed.

In the West these relics were at first any objects which touched the tomb of the saint. These thus acquired the power of operating the same miracles as were performed each day at the saint's tomb. According to Marignan,⁷ portions of the body were rarely taken as relics in the West before the close of the Merovingian epoch, for there the idea of bodily resurrection was still too strong to admit of such violation. A church decree of the latter eighth century may have had something to do with changing this attitude: "The seventh general council of Nicea (787) forbade the consecration

⁵ Kellner, *op. cit.*, p. 154: "Die offizielle Heiligenverehrung beschränkte sich anfangs denn auch auf die Märtyrer. Das erste Beispiel der öffentlichen Verehrung von Heiligen, die nicht Märtyrer waren, sind Papst Silvester und Martin von Tours, indem ihnen zu Ehren unter Papst Symmachus um 500 in Rom eine Kirche erbaut und auf ihren Namen geweiht wurde, die basilica Silvestri et Martini."

⁶ In the general mediaeval cult were included also apostles, virgins, angels, and the Mother of God.

⁷ Marignan, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-216: "Nul, qu'il fût, n'aurait osé soustraire un membre, une partie du corps du saint, et l'on s'explique l'étonnement du clergé romain en présence des demandes de restes des Apôtres qui leur étaient adressées par les empereurs, il ne pouvait comprendre cette coutume sacrilege. (Cf. Gregoire le Grand, *Epistola Constantinae Augustae*, III, Epistol. XXX: 'Cognoscat autem tranquillissima domina, quia Romanis consuetudo non est, quando sanctorum reliquias dant, ut quidquam tangere

of churches in which relics⁸ were not present, under pain of excommunication." However that may be, we know that by the beginning of the ninth century the "exportation of bodies of martyrs from Rome had assumed the dimensions of a regular commerce."⁹ It was during this period that churches and monasteries in the West began to translate bodies of martyrs and confessors to attract the faithful and thus increase their offerings.

The translation of St. Fides¹⁰ (Foy) during the latter ninth century is a case in point. At the age of twelve years (303 A. D.) she suffered martyrdom at Agen with bishops St. Caprais, St. Prime, and St. Felicien. In the fifth century their remains were secretly collected and transferred to the basilica of that place. Soon the tomb of St. Fides became celebrated because of the miracles performed there, and pilgrims came from distant countries to it. During the ninth century, the monastery of Conques in Rouergue commenced to be celebrated. Desiring the body of a saint to attract the faithful, the abbot sent some of its monks to get the relics of St. Vincent of Sargossa; but on their way, these envoys heard of St. Fides and decided to secure her relics. Accordingly, one of their number became a secular priest at Agen, gained the confidence of the monks, and was assigned the task of guarding the relics of this saint. After two years he managed to steal these relics and escape with them to Conques. There they attracted pilgrims not

praesumant de corpore; sed tantummodo in Pyxide brandeum mittitur atque ad sacratissima corpora sanctorum ponitur. Quod levatum in ecclesia, quae est dedicanda, debita cum veneratione reconditur." Le pape ajoute: "In Romanis namque vel totius Occidentis partibus omnino intolerabile est atque sacrilegium, si sanctorum corpora tangere quisquam fortasse voluerit. Quod si praesumpserit, certum est quia haec temeritas impunita nullo modo remanabit". A l'époque mérovingienne, les restes des saints donnés comme reliques étaient donc fort rares et dans tous les documents qui nous sont parvenus, on ne peut enregistrer que deux ou trois cas qui prouvent la violation du tombeau." See also *ibid.*, p. 223.

⁸ Albert Hauck, *Relics*, Encyc. Brit. Vol. XXIII (1911), p. 60. See also N. Delehaye, *Saints*, *ibid.*, XXIII, p. 1101.

⁹ Herbert Thurston, Catholic Encyc. (1911), Vol. XII, p. 737; sources given.

¹⁰ *Liber Miraculorum Sancti Fides* publié par l'abbé A. Rouillet (Collection de textes pour servir à l'étude et à l'enseignement de l'Historie). See introduction for account. The translation took place about 878.

only from surrounding districts, but also from Aquitania, France, and all Europe. It was at the beginning of the eleventh century (1006) that Bernward, bishop of Hildesheim, made a pilgrimage to St. Martin's at Tours and St. Denis' at Paris, and brought back to Hildesheim the relics of these and other saints for his monastery.¹¹

This general attitude toward relics in the tenth and eleventh centuries is well summarized by Professor Warren. "Quick to take advantage of the general enthusiasm for holy things, bishops vied with abbots in exalting the importance of their charges. The healing power of relics was confidently proclaimed, and measures were taken to heighten their sanctity. The discovery of a part of Moses' rod at Sens, which brought to that city a goodly influx of worshippers from all western Europe, and incidentally made Sens and its see opulent, prepared the way for the appearance of St. John the Baptist's head a year or two later (1010) at St. Jean d'Angely, at the opportune moment of the return of William of Aquitania from his customary pilgrimage to Rome. Some contentious minds there were who scouted the genuineness of the treasures, but the visit of Robert and his queen to the sacred spot, of the king of Navarre, the duke of Gascony, the count of Champagne, not to mention princes and bishops, abbots and magistrates, French and Provençals, Spaniards and Italians, speedily drove the petty critics to cover. . . . The age demanded memorials of the martyred dead, or at least the communities of religion did, and the demands were wonderfully supplied."¹² About a century later

¹¹ See Pertz, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, Vol. IV, pp. 775-776: *Vita Bernwardi Episcopi Hildesheimensis*.

¹² F. M. Warren, *A Plea for the Study of Mediaeval Latin*, P. M. L. A., XVII (new series, 1909), p. liii. Relics had another important use. Oaths were commonly sworn upon them. See Marignan, *op. cit.*, p. 226: "Le culte des reliques va grandir de plus en plus durant le moyen âge; déjà il pénètre dans la vie publique et tout serment ne sera tenu pour valable s'il n'est fortifié par la sainteté de ces objects vénérés. Les rois même ont l'habitude d'un porter toujours avec eux, et les sujets des princes mérovingiens leur jurent fidélité sur les châsses des saints (cf. Labbe, *Concilia V*, p. 27). 'Jura-verunt antipositis reliquiis sanctorum!'" A good illustration for our period of the usage suggested above is given by Orderic Vitalis (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, Bk. III, chap. xiv), who tells of William the Conqueror's wearing around his neck into battle the sacred relics upon which Harold, the immediate successor of Edward, had sworn: "Cujus (Harold) accelerationem Willermus dux ut audavit, omnes suos armari mane sabbati iussit, et ipse missam audavit, et dominicis sacramentis corpus et animam munivit, reliquiasque sanctas, super quas Heraldus juerat, collo suo humiliter appendit."

than the time here referred to, when the abbey, St. Medard of Soissons, sent an embassy to get a tooth of Christ, Guibert de Nogent,¹³ with a keenness of analysis practically unknown in his time, wrote a pungent criticism of the relic-seeking mania (ca. 1119).

L. Petit de Julleville¹⁴ has indicated the practical significance of the relics of the saint for the people during the entire mediaeval period. In connection with the story of the death of St. Alexis at Rome, and of the thronging of the people in the streets to touch the saint's body, he writes: "Au xe siècle, le saint est avant tout un protecteur; son corps ou ses reliques matérialisent, pour ainsi dire, cette protection. . . . Heureuse la cité qui renferme les reliques d'un saint et qui les honore! Ce n'est pas le lieu de sa naissance ni même lieu de sa mort qui détermine les limites de son patronage; c'est le lieu de sa sépulture."

Thus the saint was the guardian, the intercessor, for the people. He was one of the most potent factors in making the Christian religion real to them. His relics, as we have seen, were an absolute necessity for the establishing of a church, abbey, or monastery. They might be discovered through divine vision, begged, or stolen. That mattered not; possession was the important thing. In the minds of the devout, all the activities of the places possessing the relics centered about them, and prospered only through the divine assistance of the saint or saints represented. This, then, represents in part the cult of the saints during the middle ages.

PILGRIMAGES TO SAINTS' TOMBS.

We have already seen that it is the attitude toward saints' relics that explains in part the religious pilgrimages in the middle ages. According to legend, they began about 326 A. D. with the

¹³ See Guibert de Nogent, *De Pignoribus Sanctorum* in *Patrologia Latina*, Vol. CLVI, cols. 607-679. See also appreciation and study by Abel Lefranc in *Études sur l'Histoire du Moyen Âge dédiées à Gabriel Monod* (Paris, 1896) pp. 286-306. To the contention of two cities that each possessed the head of John the Baptist Guibert remarks in satirical vein: "Quid ergo magis ridiculum super tanto homine praedicetur, quam si biceps esse ab utrisque dicatur?" (*P. L. op. cit.*, col. 624.).

¹⁴ L. Petit de Julleville, *Hist. de la Langue et de la Litt. franç.* (Paris, 1896), Vol. I, pp. 11-12.

pilgrimage of Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine, to the Holy Land to find the true cross.¹⁶ From that time the East became for the West the country of holy relics. One has but to read the first fifty pages of M. Brehier's¹⁷ work on the crusades to see how the pilgrimages increased from the fourth to the close of the eleventh century, and how they included all classes. In a briefer study on the same subject he indicates clearly that one of the main factors which made the crusade possible was the attitude toward holy relics: "Instead of diminishing, the enthusiasm of Western Christians for the pilgrimages to Jerusalem seemed rather to increase during the eleventh century. Not only princes, bishops, knights, but even men and women of the humbler classes undertook the holy journey (Radulphus Glaber IV, vi). Whole armies of pilgrims traversed Europe, and in the valley of the Danube hospices were established where they could replenish their provisions. In 1026 Richard, Abbot of St. Vannes, led 700 pilgrims into Palestine at the expense of Richard II, Duke of Normandy. In 1065 over 12,000 Germans who had crossed Europe, under the command of Günther, Bishop of Bamberg, while on their way to Palestine had to seek shelter in a ruined fortress, where they defended themselves against a troop of Bedouins (Lambert of Hersfeld, in *Mon. Germ. Hist. Script.* V. 168). Thus it is evident that at the close of the eleventh century the route to Palestine was familiar enough to Western Christians who looked upon the Holy Sepulchre as the most venerable of relics and were ready to brave any peril in order to visit it."¹⁸ This was exactly the motive to which Pope Urban appealed when at the council of Clermont he spoke in behalf of the first crusade: "On 27 November (1095) the pope himself addressed the assembled multitudes, exhorting them to go forth and rescue the Holy Sepulchre. Amid wonderful enthusiasm and cries of 'God wills it!' all rushed toward the pontiff to pledge themselves by vow to depart for the Holy Land."¹⁹

¹⁶ Kellner, *op. cit.*, p. 326.

¹⁷ L. Brehier, *L'Église et L'Orient au Moyen Âge, Les Croisades* (Paris, 1907). See especially pp. 32 ff. for the tenth century, and pp. 42 ff. for the eleventh century.

¹⁸ *Crusades, Cath. Encyc.*, Vol. IV, p. 545.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 546.

After the Orient, Rome, the city of martyrs, and Santiago de Compostela in Spain, the reputed possessor of the relics of St. James, were the principal meccas for the European world. But aside from these, there were numerous shrines containing relics varying from local to international interest. The cases of St. Fides of Conques, St. Martin of Tours, and St. Denis of Paris, already cited, furnish examples of this kind, and the list of names could be multiplied indefinitely. I do not hold that this was the only motive inciting people to go on these pilgrimages; others of importance could be mentioned; but they have nothing to do with our present study. The main point to emphasize here is that these pilgrimages find a practical significance for us in the attitude of the people toward holy relics, and toward the cult of the saints; the popular attraction for the pilgrims was the shrine of the saint.

FESTIVALS OF SAINTS

But the feature in connection with the cult which the Church emphasized from the beginning and on down through the middle ages was the anniversary or festival of the saint. This feature found official recognition first in the local calendars, which gave merely the names of the saints, and the dates and places of their feasts (i. e. the anniversaries of their passions); for, as the reader will recall from a previous paragraph, all anniversary services in their origin were purely local.¹⁹ It seems that the breaking down of this "restriction of festivals to those commemorating saints of a specific locality", came about through the entrance of the Franks and Anglo-Saxons into the Roman church. Since these nations had no Christian martyrs and saints of their own, they adopted along with the Roman ritual the calendar and festivals of the Roman saints. Dr. Kellner²⁰ thinks that "the first step toward the general observance of the cultus of particular saints throughout the church, and the admission of other than merely local saints to a place in the devotions of each community", may have been affected by the litanies which came into use in France. However this may be, the significant fact for us is that

¹⁹ Kellner, *op. cit.*, p. 160 mentions as exceptions to this from the first John the Baptist and Stephen, the Protomartyr.

²⁰ Kellner, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-159. According to him, the oldest form of litany of the saints is contained in the prayer book of Charles the Bald (875-881).

during the Carolingian period the West addressed its "ora pro nobis" to an interminable roll of martyrs, confessors, and virgins.²¹ More to the point as far as regards the official recognition of Roman saints' festivals in the West, is the fact that Pepin (751-768) replaced the Gallican liturgy with the Roman and thus established the Gregorian calendar with its feast days of Roman saints.²²

With regard to the cult of Oriental saints, M. Brehier²³ in the course of an interesting study on Oriental saints in the West suggests that Syrian merchants may have introduced them. Though this suggestion furnishes an interesting problem, its solution is not essential to our present study. The important fact for us is that in western Europe, long before the origin of the *Miracle Play*, both Oriental and Roman saints were honored on feast days and as patron saints sustained a vital relation to the people.

In this connection, the special emphasis which Dr. Weydig puts on the fact that the Virgin Mary became widely honored by the Confréries in France beginning with the twelfth century, and that they gave dramatic presentation of her legends, furnishes a just cause for charging that he has failed in this respect to get the mediaeval point of view.²⁴

What he says concerning the logical result of honoring her as it appears in the dramatic presentation of her legends is to the point. But the inference that there is something unique in the establishment of her cult and the diffusion of her legends through the West is surely misleading. The Mother of God, an Oriental saint in origin, did not come into the West as a lone wanderer. The general movement which made Oriental saints popular in the West was

²¹ P. L. CXXXVIII, 885-892 gives examples.

²² For discussion of establishment, list of feast days included, and explanation of origin of feast see L'Abbé A. Collette, *Hist. du Bréviaire de Rouen* (Rouen, 1902), pp. 33-57.

²³ L. Brehier, *Les Colonies d'Orientalaux in Occident au Commencement du Moyen Âge* in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, Vol. XII (1903), pp. 35-36.

²⁴ Weydig, *op. cit.*, p. 20. See especially: "Die oben erwähnten Marien 'Anekdoten', die meist griechischer oder überhaupt orientalischer Herkunft und sehr alt waren, wie verschiedene Beispiele zeigen, lieferten zuerst das Material für die theatralischen Aufführungen; die in den Confréries oder Puys stattfanden, wo die Marienverehrung gepflegt und literarische Wett-kämpfe an den Festen der Mutter Gottes veranstaltet wurden."

well established by the tenth and eleventh centuries, and naturally included the Virgin Mary, though it is true that she was one of the most popular.²⁵ The logical result of this movement was the establishing of a new fashion in European literature: the writing of Latin lives of those saints, and the inventing of new, marvelous legends concerning them.²⁶

There is another significant fact for us which the modern point of view has caused many people to overlook: according to the mediæval popular conception every saint alike, whatever place modern historical criticism has given him, was a patron or intercessor and a protector. Thus from a popular point of view, in the same class came such saints as Martial, Denis, Martin, Nicholas, Catherine, Lazarus, Paul, and John the Baptist. Take the case of St. Martial, bishop of Limoges during the third century, as an illustration of how popular conception gave him a place beside the disciples of the Saviour. I quote Leon Clugnet's words: "Very early, the popular imagination, which so easily creates legends, transformed St. Martial into an apostle of the first century. Sent into Gaul by St. Peter himself, he is said to have evangelized not only the Province of Limoges but all Aquitaine. He performed many miracles, among others the raising of a dead man to life, by touching him with a rod which St. Peter had given him. A 'Life of St. Martial' attributed to Bishop Aurelian, his successor, in reality the work of an eleventh century forger, develops this account. According to it, Martial was born in Palestine, was one of the seventy-two disciples of Christ, assisted at the resurrection of Lazarus, was at the

²⁵ The writings of Hroswitha (b. ca. 940, d. ca. 1002) indicate that saints' legends were well known in her time; q. v.: *Hrotsvithae Opera, recensuit et emendavit Paulus de Winterfeld* (Berlin, 1902).

²⁶ Here again Petit de Julleville (*Hist.*, Vol. I, p. 18) summarizes the situation for us: "Vers le xe siècle, les vies de saints orientaux, jusque-là peu connues en Occident, se repandirent en France par des rédactions latines, et l'imagination émerveillée en reçut une vive secousse. On commence dans mainte abbaye d'écrire la vie d'un saint patron, dont on s'était contentée jusque-là de savoir le nom et de vénérer les reliques. Les documents faisaient défaut; on s'en passa, on se contenta des traditions les plus vagues et les plus lointaines; quelquefois peut-être on se passa de traditions comme de documents, et l'imagination fit tous les frais. Il y eut certainement de grands abus dans ce zèle hagiographique." Petit de Julleville also calls attention to the fact that Guibert de Nogent denounces this practice.

Last Supper, was baptized by St. Peter, etc. This tissue of fables, which fills long pages, was received with favor not only by the unlettered but also by the learned of past centuries and even modern times."²⁷ I call attention to this aspect of the mediaeval point of view, for a recognition of it will assist much in the interpretation of our problem.

But we now return from this necessary digression to the character of the saint's feast. In its origins, as the reader will recall, it was a solemn memorial. The first move away from this, after the cult of saints became established was a change to a local feast²⁸ in honor of the saint to whom a church had been raised. In this connection, Marignan's²⁹ chapter on the feast of the saint has one significant fact for us, viz., as early as the Merovingian period the feast day had two clearly distinguishable features, the ecclesiastical and the unecclesiastical. The Church furnished the ecclesiastical in religious services lasting from midnight vigils into the evening of the feast day itself.³⁰

The people furnished the unecclesiastical in informal reunions, banquets, dances, orgies, and in fairs for the exchange of goods. Down through the middle ages the two developed side by side. The Roman breviaries give us the former; and the repeated prohibitory decrees of the Church regarding various folk pastimes on feast days,³¹ and especially on the vigils, show that the latter kept pace.

²⁷ *St. Martial in Cath. Encyc.* (1910) Vol. IX, p. 722. For complete contemporary narrative see *Orderic Vitalis*, *op. cit.*, Bk. II, chap. xvii.

²⁸ We have already seen that the local feast in time became general.

²⁹ Marignan, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-154.

³⁰ Attention should be called here to the manner in which the worship of saints asserted itself in the beginning. At first, it appeared in the liturgy of the mass, then after the development of the service of the hours, it found a place there. As early as the sixth century, in connection with this service, it was customary, according to Aurelian of Arles (*Regula ad Monachos*, P. L. LXVIII, p. 396), to read a portion of the account of the martyrdom of a saint. This was the commencement of the lections of the breviary, and led to the collections of martyrologies, which contained lives or merely notices of the saints, arranged according to their feast days for the entire year. See Kellner, *op. cit.*, pp. 246-247.

³¹ A good illustration of concessions to the people in this respect is given in a statement of Pope Gregory I. regarding the celebration of feast days by the early converts in Britain. The Pope is writing to Abbot Mellitus, just going into Britain (601 A. D.): "And because they (the converts) have

The important fact to bear in mind here, and later in connection with what I shall say concerning the origin of the *Miracle Play*, is that the ecclesiastical feature will constantly tend to include unofficial additions. Some of these will become official and others will become secular or unecclesiastical. It follows that the trend to the secular will be especially strong in an age of unecclesiastical influences. One illustration of such an unofficial addition is the hymn, as we understand the term today, variously known during the middle ages as sequence, prose, or hymn. Concerning hymns L'Abbé Collette³² writes that they were not introduced into the Roman liturgy until very late, and that their introduction finally was due to monastic influence. The time at which this introduction took place is stated pretty definitely by another writer. Thus: "It was at a comparatively late date (about the middle of the twelfth century) that the Roman Liturgy admitted hymns into its Breviary. In its primitive austerity it had rejected them, without however condemning their employment in other liturgies."³³

Now hymns were one part of the religious services of the saint's festival. For instance, we find that during the tenth and eleventh centuries the monks of St. Gall on the feast days of their patron saints went through the surrounding country bearing the relics belonging to their monastery and singing festal songs.³⁴ In fact, one has but to go through the pages of *Analecta Hymnica* which include the *Proprium de Sanctis* to see that hymns were numerously employed for saints' feast days during the eleventh century.³⁵

been used to slaughter many oxen in sacrifice to devils, some solemnity must be exchanged for them on this account, as that on the day of the dedication, or the nativities of the holy martyrs, whose relics are there deposited, they may celebrate the solemnity with religious feasting, and no more offer beasts to the Devil, but kill cattle to the praise of God in their eating, etc." Cf. Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Bk. I, chap. xxx.

³² L'Abbé Collette, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

³³ Fernand Cabrol, *Breviary, Cath. Encyc.* (1907), Vol. II, p. 722.

³⁴ See P. A. Schubiger, *Die Sängerschule St. Gallens* (Einsiedeln, 1858), p. 70.

³⁵The ninth to the twelfth centuries represent a period of great development in feast days. Thus Fernand Cabrol (*loc. cit.*, p. 721) writes: "Even up to the ninth century the feasts of saints observed in the breviary were not numerous." But concerning the twelfth century F. S. Holweck (*Cath. Encyc.*, Vol. VI, p. 22) tells us that "the decree of Gratian (ca. 1150) mentions forty-one besides diocesan patronal celebrations."

The following summary from a passage by L'Abbé Collette³⁶ gives further examples of such unofficial additions to saints' services. In the eleventh century there was in Normandy a pleiad of monks, musicians, and littérateurs, who enriched the liturgy of Offices, of which the usage was preserved in part down to the eighteenth century. Isembert, monk of St. Ouen and later abbot of Mount St. Catherine at Rouen, wrote the text and music of the office of St. Ouen as well as that of St. Nicholas; and Ainard, of Mount St. Catherine, composed the Office for the patron saint of that monastery. From that same period date the Office of St. Wulfran, composed by Angelran, a monk of Saint-Riquier, and those of St. Wandrille and St. Ansbert. There is attributed to Angelran also an Office in honor of St. Valery. As later evidence will show, it is just such embellishments³⁷ as these that are of prime importance in connection with the origin of the *Miracle Play*.

MEDIAEVAL MONASTERIES

Another fact of importance here is that the immediate environment of the *Miracle Play* in its origin is the monastery. The first significant feature for us about the mediaeval monastery is its corporate character. Although the monastery had been originally designed only as a place to which a man might retire from the world in order to devote himself more entirely to the religious life, it came in time to include many activities foreign to this primitive idea. A brief survey of some of these will be sufficient for our purposes. One of interest and importance is the commercial. According to M. Fagniez,³⁸ the early history of commerce in France is to be sought in connection with the mediaeval monasteries. Through tax exemptions granted them by the crown in the use of

³⁶ L'Abbé Collette, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-65.

³⁷ An essential difference between such embellishments as the hymn and the sequence to saints' feast day services, and that of tropes to liturgical texts (cf. L. Gautier, *Les Tropes*, Paris, 1886) is that the sequence is not an integral part of the text, while the trope is. Clemens Blume (*Trope, Cath. Encyc.*, [1912], Vol. XV, p. 65) puts this difference in a word: "The sequence is an independent unit complete in itself; the trope however forms a unit only in connection with the liturgical text, and when separated from the latter is often devoid of meaning."

³⁸ W. Gustave Fagniez, *Documents Relatifs à l'Histoire de l'Industrie et du Commerce en France; I-I. siècle-xiiis.* (Paris, 1808), pp. xxviii ff.

highways, through their locations favorably chosen, through their landed possessions, and under the guidance of intelligent monks they exerted a great influence on the development of this feature of mediaeval life. Another of the monastic activities concerning which M. Fagniez gives valuable evidence is the industrial. As an example of this sort he cites the case of the industrial organizations which centered around Saint-Riquier. There by the middle of the ninth century were bakers, merchants, blacksmiths, armorers, shoemakers, and various other tradesmen grouped according to their trades by streets around the abbey, subjects, paying a regular tax of their goods to it.³⁹ An additional instance of the same kind is furnished by a chronicler of St. Bertin.⁴⁰ He tells, according to Fagniez, that in 881, after the destruction of that abbey by fire, St. Folques, its restorer, arranged the population by trades in the same manner as indicated in the case of Saint-Riquier; and later chronicles of the abbey refer to the same arrangement. Again, when Bernard de Quincey founded the monastery of Saint-Sauveur at the commencement of the twelfth century, the faithful flocked there and put themselves under its authority. Among these were handworkers and skilled tradesmen, such as carpenters, blacksmiths, metal workers, and sculptors. All these worked under the orders of the abbey and employed their gains for common use.⁴¹ M. Fagniez summarizes the situation thus: It was then under the tutelage of the church that the first craft corporations were organized and, strange thing, commenced to be secularized.⁴² He shows also with regard to the arts and trades that from the sixth to the twelfth centuries there was a constant interchange of skilled metal and trade workers among the different monasteries of Europe.⁴³

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. xxx, xxxi. For source, see Latin appendix No. 7: *Inventaire des cens et redevances dus à l'abbaye de Saint Riquier (en 831) dans Hariulf chronique de l'Abbaye de Saint Riquier*.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xxxii. Source: *Jean d'Ypres Chron. Sancti Bertini an. 881* in *Histoire de France*, p. 71A; also 75.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, xxxiii. Cf. Orderic Vitalis, *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. viii.

⁴² *Ibid.*, xxxiii.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. xxxxiv, xxxxv. An instance not cited by Fagniez of the activity of a monastery in arts and trades is that of Hildesheim, the home of the eleventh century manuscript of our St. Nicholas plays. It had its period of great renown during the eleventh century. Cf. *Cath. Encyc.* (1907), Vol. II, p. 513; *ibid.*, (1910), Vol. VII, pp. 353-354.

Another of the activities of the monastery was educational. According to Léon Maître,⁴⁴ who has made a study of this feature of mediaeval, monastic life, the monastic and episcopal schools are the only institutions which furnished instruction from the ninth to the thirteenth century; he designates this as the Benedictine period of instruction.

The monastery is thus a commercial, industrial, cultural, and educational center. The religious activity is the only other one significant for our purposes. A discussion of its various features is not necessary here. The important fact to remember is that the dominant and centralizing force for all the activities of the monastery was its religious life. The religious services, the shrines of the patron saints, and their festivals—these were the unifying features. Thus individuals may have had special reasons for honoring a particular saint, but in their relation to the monastery its patron saint was theirs. As far as our study is concerned, we are dealing, not with the saints of a particular profession, but of a particular locality. And although our earliest *Miracle Plays* developed in connection with monastic schools, there is no conclusive evidence that they originated out of a desire to honor patrons of scholars. Relative to our type of play, you may call it monastic literary drama, school drama, or what you will; the question I am concerned with is, what is its relation to the local cult of the saint, and particularly to his feast? The evidence presented in the following chapter should leave no doubt as to its actual relation.

Finally, the other significant influence for us in connection with the mediaeval monastery is that of the Cluniac reform. As a result of this movement initiated in the tenth century hundreds of monasteries became united in great feudal organizations reaching over all Europe and England.⁴⁵ I merely call attention to the movement here. As will be seen later, it is a factor to be considered in connection with the origin and development of the *Miracle Play*.

⁴⁴ Léon Maître, *Les Écoles Épiscopales et Monastiques de L'Occident depuis Charlemagne jusqu'à Philippe Auguste* (Paris, 1866), pp. 173-174.

⁴⁵ The standard work on this movement is Ernst Sackur's *Die Cluniacenser* (Halle, 1892), two vols. Reviewed in *English Historical Review*, Vol. X, pp. 137-138.

THE MEDIAEVAL RENAISSANCE

The period of the origin and development of the *Miracle Play*, as I have already stated, is that of the mediaeval renaissance, including in general the last half of the eleventh and the first half of the twelfth centuries. In this period, which in a sense marked a turning to a modern point of view in the problems attacked and ways of thinking, one main characteristic is clear even to the casual reader; it is an age of unecclesiastical influences.⁴⁶ The significant thing for us is the relation of these influences to monastic life. Thus in connection with the schools, Wattenbach⁴⁷ tells us that it was a period in which a zealous study of Roman antiquity vied with that of theology, and that men were completely at home in the *Aeneid* and in Ovid. A good example of such a man, influential in monastic life, is Hezilo, Bishop of Hildesheim (1054-1079). After he had completed his studies in France and taken charge of the monastery at Hildesheim, he assumed charge of the instruction in the school there because of his excellent education, especially in his extensive acquaintance with the works of classic authors.⁴⁸

Of course there were many factors that assisted in establishing this renaissance spirit within the monasteries. Undoubtedly one of the most important of these was the secular scholars. As young men, unfettered by monastic rules, often irreverent of traditions,

⁴⁶ By unecclesiastical influences I do not mean those outside of the Church. The all-inclusiveness of the mediaeval church practically excludes the possibility of any influence of an intellectual nature entirely outside it.

⁴⁷ W. Wattenbach, *Lateinische Gedichte aus Frankreich im elften Jahrhundert* in *Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akad.* (1891), p. 97.

⁴⁸ Cf. Th. Lindner, *Allegemeine Deutsche Biographie*, Vol. XII, p. 323: "Auch die Pflege des Schulunterrichtes liess er sich anlegen sein, wie er selbst eine vortreffliche Bildung und Belesenheit in den classischen Autoren besass". I do not mean to imply that Latin classics were not taught in monastic schools before this period. At the close of the tenth century Richer (*Hist. sui Temp.*, Lib. III, cxlvii) wrote concerning his teacher, Gerbart of Rheims, later Pope Sylvester II: "Portas igitur adhibuit, quibus assuescendos arbitrabatur. Legit itaque ac docuit Maronem et Statium Terentiumque poetas, Juvenalem quoque ac Persium Horatiumque satiricos, Lucanum etiam historiographum. Quibus assuefactos, locutionumque modis compositis, ad rhetorican transduxit." My point is this: a widespread, zealous study of Latin classics was *characteristic* of this age.

human in all that the word implies, eager alike in the pursuit of knowledge and adventure, they wandered from school to school seeking instruction from the most famous teachers of the day, carrying with them everywhere something of the spirit of the forces in the world outside the monasteries that were humanizing and transforming society. Some of these wandering scholars remained such, others took the vows of the order and came in time to rank high in monastic and secular ecclesiastical affairs. But however zealous they might afterwards become in the monastic life, and however much age might sober down their youthful spirits, the renaissance had given them its permanent heritage of liberalizing influences. They were the leaven. In these men there blended the ecclesiastical and the unecclesiastical.⁴⁹

Notable examples of the class here characterized are Hilarius (ca. 1125), the author of one of our St. Nicholas plays, Odo of Orleans, bishop of Tournai (d. 1119), Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury (1005-1089), Geoffrey, abbot of St. Albans and author of the lost St. Catherine play (d. 1146), and Abelard, the great teacher (1079-1142). A few words on the life of each of these men will suffice here. Little is known concerning Hilarius:⁵⁰ proba-

⁴⁹ P. S. Allen's comments on the goliards are pertinent here (*Mediaeval Latin Lyrics, Modern Philology*, Vol. V, p. 22): "As early as the tenth century perhaps, but quite certainly as early as the eleventh, we know that the goliards were composing and singing Latin verses. I do not think it necessary to believe with Giesebricht that the goliard movement originated in the schools of France during the twelfth century, but it may be well to imagine that it was there and at that time that the movement gained its greatest impetus and its widest currency". Cf. also Allen, *The Origins of the German Minnesang, Mod. Phil.*, Vol. III, p. 19, relative to the character of the goliards.

In this same connection, Creizenach (*Geschichte*, Vol. I, p. 93) believes that the introduction of comic and secular elements into the liturgical plays was due to wandering clerks and goliards.

⁵⁰ For summary of opinions of scholars regarding his nationality see P. S. Allen, *Med. Latin Lyrics, Mod. Phil.*, Vol. VI, p. 73, footnote 3. For discussion of his non-dramatic poetical works see *Ibid.*, pp. 72-76. For brief biography see *Hist. Litt. de la France*, Vol. XII, pp. 251-254, and *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, Vol. IX, p. 831. Professor Schofield, *Eng. Lit. from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer* (1906), p. 67 puts his significant characteristic in a brief sentence: "He seems to have been a full-blooded person without austerity."

bly he was born in England. The significant fact is that we know he received instruction from Abelard (ca. 1125) at Paraclete, and went from there to the school at Angers to carry on his study. His history from this time is as obscure as that of his early years, but he apparently remained to the end a typical wandering scholar. Odo of Orleans led a much more regular life. He was born of a noble family in Orleans, received his training at Toul, and later became teacher of dialectics at Tournai. Then in 1092 he took the vows of the Cluniac order and became abbot of St. Martin's; and in 1105 he became bishop of Tournai, which office he held until his death.⁵¹ Lanfranc's career was similar though somewhat more varied. He also was of noble birth; his parentage was Italian. In early life he studied in the different schools in Italy with the intention of entering the legal profession.⁵² But just as he was beginning to win fame in the work, he changed his mind, and deciding to enter religious life, traveled across Europe to Normandy to begin this new life in a foreign country, took the vows of the order under Herluin at the newly founded monastery of Bec, became first a famous teacher there, then abbot, and finally, under William the Conqueror, received appointment as archbishop of Canterbury. Matthew Paris' brief account of Geoffrey of St. Albans, as secular teacher, monk, and abbot in a passage already quoted⁵³ puts him in the same class with the man just mentioned. And finally, the story of Abelard's life, in its essence an epitome of the spirit of the renaissance, is too well known to need more than a passing mention here.⁵⁴ I should call attention to the fact that in his heretical teachings he

⁵¹ Cf. *Hist. Litt. de la France*, Vol. IX, pp. 583-606. Wattenbach's statement concerning him is relevant here (*op. cit.*, p. 100): "Es ist der nicht seltene Lebensgang der Gelehrten in jener Zeit. Von profanen Studien ausgehend, ganz in der heidnischen Götterwelt heimisch, auch nicht selten einem allzu freien Leben ergeben, werden sie plötzlich von der Gewalt des mönchischen Geistes erfasst und wenden sich der strengsten kirchlichen Richtung zu".

⁵² Cf. Orderic Vitalis, *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. IV: "Hic ex nobili parentela ortus, Papiae urbis Italiae civibus, ab annis infantiae in scholia liberalium artium studuit, et saecularium legum peritiam ad patriae suae morem intentione laica fervidus edidicit." See also *Hist. Litt. de la France*, Vol. VIII, pp. 260-305.

⁵³ *Vide supra*, chap. I, p. 5.

⁵⁴ Cf. *Hist. Litt. de la France*, Vol. XII, pp. 86-152.

exemplifies in its highest degree one aspect of the unecclesiastical influence. The important consideration for us in this brief survey is that these men of the monasteries represent a new spirit, the spirit of the renaissance.

It is but natural, that in harmony with the spirit of such men as these, the mediaeval renaissance was a great creative period. This fact is too well known to need more than mere mention. On matters having special relation to our problem I cite the evidence of some of our well-known, and recognized mediaevalists. Clemens Blume calls it the period of the zenith of Latin hymnody.⁵⁵ L'Abbé Collette has named a few of the "pleiad" of Norman monks, musicians and poets, who modified and enriched the liturgy of the saints' Offices during this century, and has indicated some of their work in this respect.⁵⁶ Professor Wilhelm Meyer writes that music, also, was making significant progress,⁵⁷ that it had an essential relation to the spirit of the times,⁵⁸ and that it had a necessary part in all Mediaeval Latin Lyric and dramatic poetry.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ *Hymnody, Catholic Encyc.* (1910), Vol. VII, p. 603.

⁵⁶ *Vide Supra*, chap. III, p. 37.

⁵⁷ See *Fragmenta Burana* (Berlin, 1901), p. 56: "In der ersten Hälfte des 12. Jahrhunderts entwickelte sich das geistige Leben jeder Art im nördlichen Frankreich zu wunderbarer Blüthe. Die Musik machte durch Einführung der mehrstimmigen Compositionen bedeutende Fortschritte und wurde mit dem grössten Eifer von den sangesfreudigen Menschen jener Zeit ausgeübt und an der Hand der Musik betratnen auch die Dichter neue Wege".

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 179: "Der Geist des französischen Volkes regte sich am Schlusse des 11. Jahrhunderts auf das Lebhafteste und wendete sich besonders auf die Wissenschaften, welche die höchsten Fragen behandelten, die Philosophie und die Dogmatik. Die geistigen Kämpfe, welche sich in Frankreich daran knüpften und besonders durch die Gründung der Universität Paris ein festes Centrum erhielten, stellten in 12. Jahrhundert Frankreich den anderen europäischen Völkern voran. Denn wo die höchsten Wissenschaften gedeihen, da gedeihen auch die übrigen. Das gilt besonders von der Dichtkunst. Diese erhielt einen neuen und mächtigen Impuls durch die Einführung des mehrstimmigen Gesangs, der in Frankreich im Anfange des 12. Jahrhunderts aufblühte. Wurde so schon die Lust in prächtigen Festgesängen jeder Art erhabt".

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 37: "Mögen die Handschriften Neumen oder Noten überliefern oder nicht, die ganze mittellateinische lyrische und dramatische Dichtung ist stets ihrem Ursprunge treu geblieben, d. h., sie ist gesungen worden und die dichterischen und musikalischen Formen waren ebenso wichtig wie die Gedanken".

Finally, it is well to recall here relative to the creative spirit, that the eleventh century also, according to Joseph Bédier,⁶⁰ marks the period of the Chanson de Geste, and that he has established this fact conclusively by a return to the mediaeval point of view in his study of the Chanson de Geste at its source in connection with monasteries, pilgrimages, and legends of saints.

⁶⁰ Cf. Joseph Bédier, *Les Légendes Épiques: Recherches sur la formation des Chansons de geste* (1908-1913), four vols.; and *La Légende des Enfances de Charlemagne* in *Studies in Honor of A. Marshall Eliot* (Baltimore, 1911), pp. 81-107. For brief summary of Bédier's work relative to the Chanson de Geste see G. Lanson, *Histoire de la Littérature Française* (Paris, 1912), pp. 25 ff.

CHAPTER IV.

ST. NICHOLAS AND HIS MIRACLE PLAYS

The purpose of this chapter is to show that there is an essential and causal relation between the features of mediaeval life just discussed and the origin of the St. Nicholas *Miracle Play*. As a preface to this study I review briefly the St. Nicholas legend. According to it, St. Nicholas was bishop of Myra, Asia Minor, during the first half of the fourth century. During his life he was especially noted as a benefactor of the people. As an instance of this, one of his first acts after he had received his inheritance was the bestowal of dowries upon three sisters in the manner represented in our "dowry" drama, in order to save their virtue. After his death¹ and burial at Myra, he continued his rôle of benefactor through his appearance to those praying to him, and through the miraculous power of healing oil which continually flowed from his tomb.² A historical fact of importance to add here is that in 1087 Italian merchants stole his body from Myra and brought it to Bari, Italy.³

THE CULT OF ST. NICHOLAS

Relative to his cult in Western Europe the following table will show his principal *loci sancti* in that part of the country up to the period of the appearance of his plays.

¹ The day of his death, which, of course, fixes that of his feast day in the calendar, was December 6.

² Since the *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandists is completed only through the opening days of November, that work is of no assistance to one for the study of the St. Nicholas legends. The sources which I have employed for the study of the legends, of his cult, and of the honoring accorded to him on his feast day are principally the following: *Analecta Bollandiana* (1882 ff.) Vol. I-XXXI; *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* (Bruxelles, 1899), Vol. I-II; *ibid.*, supplement (1911); *Catalogus Codd. Hagiog. Lat.* (Bruxelles 1886), Vol. I-II; *Catalogus Codd. Hagiog. Bibl. Nat.* (Paris, 1889-1893), Vol. I-III; *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, Vol. I-XXXI; *Thesaurus Hymnologicus*, H. A. Daniel (Leipsic, 1855), Vol. I-IV; *Lateinische Hymnen des Mittelalters*, F. J. Mone, (Freiburg, 1855), Vol. I-III; *Analecta Hymnica*, G. M. Dreves and Clemens Blume (Leipsic, 1886 ff.) Vol. I ff. See also Kurt K. Rud. Bohnstedt, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-44.

³ Orderic Vitalis, *op. cit.*, Bk. VII, chap. xii, gives an interesting contemporary account. For recent study see Francesco Nitti di Vito, *La Legenda della Translatione di S. Nicola di Bari, I. Mariani Travi V. Vecchi* (1902), 19 pp.; *Estratto della Rassegna Pugliese* t. xix (1902), pp. 33-49; reviewed in *Anal. Bolland.* Vol. XXII (1902), pp. 352-354.

GERMANY.				
District	Place	Date.	Evidence of Cult.	
<i>West</i>	St. Amandus ⁴ . Ca. 50 miles s. w. of Liege.	679 A. D.	Shrine.	
Lorraine	Prüm ⁵ . Ca. 40 miles s. e. of Liege.	853 A. D.	Martyrology of Wandelbert.	
	Brunweiler ⁶ . Ca. 50 m. n. e. of Liege.	1028 A. D.	Monastery.	
	Liege ⁷ .	1030 A. D.	Miracles.	
	Stavelot ⁸ . Ca. 20 m. n. e. of Liege.	1030 A. D.	Chapel.	
	Stavelot ⁹ .	1037 A. D.	Shrine.	
	Verdun ¹⁰ . District of Lorraine.	1045 A. D.	Altar.	
	Lobbes ¹¹ . Ca. 60 m. s. w. of Liege.	Ca. 1080 A. D.	Cloister.	
	Poussey ¹² . District of Lorraine.	Ca. 1087 A. D.	Miracles.	
<i>North</i>	Brunweiler ¹³ . See above.	1090 A. D.	Miracles.	
Saxony	Halberstadt ¹⁴ . Ca. 50 m. s. e. of Hildesheim.	973 A. D.	Church.	
	Lüneburg ¹⁵ . Ca. 80 m. n. of Hildesheim.	1055 A. D.	Monastery.	
	Osnabrück ¹⁶ . Ca. 80 m. n. w. of Hildesheim.	1070 A. D.	Church.	

⁴ *Mon. Germ. Hist. Scr.*, Vol. XXV, p. 31. Since this is my earliest reference I quote the passage; "Qui cum (St. Amandus) sentiret suam dissolutionem, cupiens cum Christo vivere, iussit se deduci in dictam ecclesiam (coenobium in honore beati apostoli Petri), et cum viaticum atque extremam unctionem de manu sacerdotum accepisset, ante altare beati Nicolai, quem intimo cordis dilegebat, diu in oratione procumbens, sanctam animam orando inter manus angelorum Deo reddidit". For life of St. Amandus (587-679 A. D.) see *Gallia Christiana*, Vol. III, col. 255.

⁵ *Patrologia Latina*, Vol. CXXI, col. 620.

⁶ *Mon. Germ. Hist. Scr.*, Vol. XI, pp. 396 and 401.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. XXV, pp. 69-70; *Anal. Bolland.*, Vol. XX (1901), p. 429.

⁸ *Mon. Germ. Hist. Scr.*, Vol. XV, p. 965.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. XII, p. 43.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, p. 404.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. XXI, p. 312.

¹² *Ibid.*, Vol. XXV, p. 284; cf. *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades* (1895), Vol. V, pp. 293-294.

¹³ *Mon. Germ. Hist. Scr.*, Vol. XIV, pp. 144-146.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, p. 86.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, p. 398.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. XII, pp. 74-75.

GERMANY

Place	District	Date.	Evidence of Cult.
	Hildesheim ¹⁷ .	Ca. 1100 A. D.	Ms. of Miracle Plays.
Southeast	Eichstadt ¹⁸ .	Ca. 965 A. D.	Ms. of Life by Bishop Reginaldus.
Bavaria	Emmeramus ¹⁹ . Ca. 50 m. e. of Eichstadt.	Ca. 1050 A. D.	Life by Othlo, a monk
	Passau ²⁰ . Ca. 100 m. s. e. of Eichstadt.	Ca. 1070 A. D.	Monastery.
South	Lusanne ²¹ . Ca. 100 m. n. e. of Einsiedeln.	1089 A. D.	Chapel.
Suabia	Peterhausen ²² . Ca. 40 m. n. e. of Einsiedeln.	1092 A. D.	Church.
	Zweifalt ²³ . Ca. 70 m. n. e. of Einsiedeln.	1092 A. D.	Church.
	Einsiedeln ²⁴ . Fragment of Miracle Play.		Ms. of twelfth century.

FRANCE.

District.	Place.	Date	Evidence of Cult
Southeast.	Vienne. ²⁵ Upper Rhone.	858 A. D.	Martyrology of Ado.
North-central.	Paris. ²⁶	Before 1031 A. D.	Chapel in Palace founded by Robert the Pious.
Northwest. and Center.	Angers. ²⁷	1020 A. D.	Monastery

¹⁷ *Zts. für deutsches Alterthum*, Vol. XXXV (1891), pp. 401-407.

¹⁸ *Mon. Germ. Hist. Scr.*, Vol. VII, p. 257; and *Anal. Bolland.*, Vol. II (1883), pp. 143-151.

¹⁹ *Mon. Germ. Hist. Scr.*, Vol. XI, p. 391.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, p. 748; and Vol. XXV, p. 657.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIV, p. 799.

²² *Ibid.*, Vol. XVII, p. 277.

²³ *Ibid.*, Vol. X, p. 75.

²⁴ *Anzeiger für Kunde der deutschen Vorzeit*, Vol. VI (1859), col. 207-210.

²⁵ *Patrologia Latina*, Vol. CXXIII, col. 411. This should be connected with the martyrology of Wandelbert of Prüm (q. v. note 5 under table for Germany), for, according to Kellner (*op. cit.*, p. 284), Ado lived at Prüm from 829 to 853.

²⁶ *Mon. Germ. Hist. Scr.*, Vol. IX, pp. 318 and 386-7.

²⁷ *Cat. Codd. Hagiog. Lat. Bibl. Nat.*, Vol. III, pp. 159-160; *Gallia Christ.*, Vol. XIV, pp. 558 and 567.

Place	District	Date.	Evidence of Cult.
Normandy	Rouen. ²⁸	Before 1054 A. D.	Musical Office.
and region of Loire valley.	Crux. ²⁹ Subject monastery of Charitas.	Before 1087 A. D.	Miracle.
	Noron. ³⁰	1090 A. D.	Legends.
	Cultura. ³¹	1090 A. D.	Miracles.
	Angers. ³²	1090 A. D.	Miracles.
	Angers. ³³	1096 A. D.	Church.
	Bec. ³⁴	1100 A. D.	Legends and Miracles.
	Fleury. ³⁵	Twelfth Century	Ms. of plays.
	Angers. ³⁶	Twelfth Century	Ms. of play by Hilarius.
	Normandy. ³⁷	Twelfth Century	Wace, <i>La Vie St. Nicholas.</i>
ENGLAND			
	St. Albans. ³⁸	Early Twelfth Century	Altar. ³⁹

²⁸ Collette, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

²⁹ Cat. Bibl. Nat., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 430-1; *ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 510-1; Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, chap. CLXXXI, *Mon. Germ.*, Vol. XXXI, p. 359; *Gallia Christ.*, Vol. XII, cols. 403-404.

³⁰ Cat. Bibl. Nat., *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 158-159; *Gallia Christ.*, Vol. XIV, p. 473; *Hist. Litt. de la France*, Vol. VIII, pp. 444-446.

³¹ Orderic Vitalis, *op. cit.*, Bk. VII, chap. xiii.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Mon. Germ.*, Vol. III, p. 168; Vol. XXVI, p. 461.

³⁴ Cat. Bibl. Nat., Vol. II, pp. 404-432; cf. *Hist. Litt. de la France*, Vol. X, p. 294.

³⁵ Vide supra, chap. II, p. 8, footnote to Fleury plays.

³⁶ Vide supra, chap. iii, p. 42. The significant fact here is not that we know where Hilarius composed his play, but that we have established his relations with a center of the St. Nicholas cult.

³⁷ Ul. Chevalier, *Reperoire des sources du Moyen Age* (*Bio.-Bibl.*), Vol. II, col. 4724; cf. *Cath. Encycl.*, Vol. XV, p. 521.

³⁸ Vide infra, chap. vi, p. 75.

³⁹ The *loci sancti* thus include in Germany, the districts of Bavaria and Suabia to the east and south, Saxony to the north, and Lorraine to the west; in France the Upper Rhone to the south, Paris in the north, and Normandy and the Loire valley in the northwest and center; and in southern England, St. Albans. In all cases the districts are indicated according to mediaeval geographical divisions.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EVIDENCE

Some observations based on the evidence presented in this table follow. In the first place, it is noticeable that all the plays are located in districts where the cult of St. Nicholas has previously been established. In the second place, Normandy and the Loire valley are the most active centers of the cult. In this connection, the references to the founding of the monastery at Angers, and to the later miracles there, are interesting and significant because they are an indication of the attitude of the people toward St. Nicholas during this period. One version of the story of the founding is told as a preface to a miracle which happened at the monastery in the latter part of the eleventh century. In this record⁴⁰ the narrator tells us that while Fulk Nerra⁴¹ was journeying toward Jerusalem to expiate his offences against God in wars, the ship on which he was sailing was overtaken by a storm near Myra. In company with others on board he prayed for succor; but the storm continued. Then some one mentioned that they were near the city in which St. Nicholas was buried, and that he had rescued from the perils of the sea many who had prayed to him. Fulk Nerra⁴² prayed to the saint, asking his intercession before God for their safety, and vowing, if the prayer was answered, to dedicate a monastery to him on his return home. Soon after this the sea became calm, and the ship reached port safely. Later, when Nerra returned to Angers, he founded the monastery as he had vowed to do. The miracle which follows this prefatory narrative is of a paralytic boy, Brientius, who prayed and kept vigils continually before the shrine of St. Nicholas with psalms and hymns until one night he was healed by the saint, who called to him from heaven: "Surge, Briente, Nicolaus ego sum." Another illustration of his work as a benefactor is found in the case of the church of St. Nicholas *Ad Muscas* at Liege (1030).⁴³ Here the church was dedicated to him because, in

⁴⁰ *Cat. Bibl. Nat., op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 159-160.

⁴¹ For brief account of Fulk Nerra see *Encyc. Brit.* (1911), Vol. XI, p. 294.

⁴² The same narrative tells that Geoffrey, the son of Fulk Nerra, deposited in the monastery relics of St. Nicholas, which had been given him by Henry III, Emperor of Germany. According to *Gallia Christiana*, Vol. XIV, p. 667, the translation occurred in 1057.

⁴³ *Anal. Bolland.*, Vol. XX, p. 425; *Mon. Germ.*, Vol. XXV, pp. 69-70.

response to the prayers of the people, he had caused a plague of flies to cease.

Further, the evidence presented in the table above indicates that active interest in the development of the cult apparently begins in the eleventh century. This interest became intensified during the latter part of the century by the above-mentioned translation of his relics to Bari; for the acquisition of them meant much not only to Bari and all Italy,⁴⁴ but also to France and Germany. One chronicler tells us that shortly after the translation, a soldier who had managed to get a portion of a finger bone of St. Nicholas as a relic, brought it to Poussey in Lorraine and thus attracted there people from Burgundy, France, and Germany to be healed or to worship.⁴⁵

According to Orderic Vitalis, Normandy also was active in its efforts to secure a share of the relics. Thus, Stephen, the cantor of the monastery at Angers, by express permission of Natalis, his abbot, went to Bari, lived there as a clerk, gained the confidence of the sacristans who guarded the relics, and at the favorable moment, stole an arm of St. Nicholas set in silver, and kept outside the shrine for the purpose of giving the benediction.⁴⁶ Notwithstanding that a hue and cry was proclaimed over all Italy, he managed to escape with it as far as Venosa. Here he was taken sick and had to detach the silver from the arm for his support. This led to the discovery of him and the recapture of the relic, which the monastery at Venosa at once appropriated.⁴⁷ A more successful effort was that of William Pantoul, a knight from Noron, Normandy. He visited Bari, and "by God's blessing obtained from those who had translated the body one tooth, and two fragments of the marble urn" in which his relics had rested at Myra. These he deposited in the church at Noron in 1092, where they "became in frequent

⁴⁴ Cf. Orderic Vitalis, *op. cit.*, Bk. VII, chap. xii: "Protinus diversae multitudines ab universis totius Hesperiae provinciis convenerunt." Also: "Denique permittente Deo, plures ecclesiae de sanctis reliquiis praefati prae-sulis obtinuerunt. Et non solum Itali et Pelasgi, sed et aliae gentes, sanctis pignoribus habitis, Deo Gratias concinunt."

⁴⁵ *Mon. Germ.*, Vol. XXV, p. 284.

⁴⁶ The employment of the same method as related here by the monk who stole the relics of St. Fides (*vide supra*, chap. III, p. 28) suggests that this may have been a favorite device among relic seekers.

⁴⁷ Orderic Vitalis, *op. cit.*, Bk. VII, chap. xiii.

request by persons suffering from fevers and other maladies, whose devout prayers aided by the merits of the good bishop Nicholas obtained what they desired in the recovery of their health." ⁴⁸

Finally, evidence cited in our tables indicates that in spirit and form the honoring of St. Nicholas was adapted to renaissance innovations of which a logical sequence was the *Miracle Play*. I refer to one of a number of legends written by a monk of Bec⁴⁹ in the twelfth century. It is an account of a miracle which took place in connection with our saint's feast day services at Crux, a subject monastery of St. Charitas, on the upper Loire. Because of the importance of this legend to us for the purposes of our study, I reprint entire the two earliest versions which I have found. The first one which I give is from a manuscript⁵⁰ of the fourteenth century in the Bibliothèque Nationale, but is regarded by the Bollandists as earlier than a thirteenth century version in the same library.

The legend follows:

"Cluniacensi coenobio subest quaedam cella quae dicitur Caritas, in qua primum praepositus constitutus est vir nobilis et religiosus, nomine Girardus, qui regimen ejusdem ecclesiae tenuit plus quam triginta annos: sub quo nimum crevit ipsa eadem cella, ita ut sub se haberet alias cellas. Inter alia vero quae possedit fidelium devotione, data est quaedam possessio, quae Crux dicitur, in terra Brigiensi a quodam illustro viro. Ad quam possessionem venerandus Girardus statim transmisit quam plurimos monachos, praeponens eis religiosum virum quendam et ferventem in ordine suo. Ubi

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Cf. *Hist. Litt. de la France*, Vol. IX, p. 294; "Un moine du Bec, qu'on croit avoir porté le nom de Nicolas, publia vers le même temps (XIIe siècle) une relation des miracles des Nicolas, Evêque de Mire, qui se multiplierent en plusieurs lieux, après qu'on eut transféré son corps en Occident."

⁵⁰ See *Cat. Bibl. Nat., op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 404 (notice of manuscript): "Codex Signatus num. 5638. Olim Colbertinus 1172, deinde Regius C 3863 6.6.B. Foliorum 139 columnis binis, exaratus saec. XIV." For text see pp. 430-431. Regarding its priority to the thirteenth century version the Bollandists write (p. 430 footnote): "Quae sequuntur jam aliis verbis repperimus in Cod. 5285 (tom. I, pp. 510-511, num. 26) (for Ms. notice of thirteenth century version, *vide infra*, chap. IV, p. 54). Attamen non ingratam legentibus non facturos censuimus, si et hanc narrationem, simpliciore et, ut videtur, magis primigeniam hic exhibuerimus."

dum essent, supervenit festivitas beatissimi ac gloriissimmi confessoris Christi Nicolai. Tum fratres requisierunt priorem si historiam de festivitate, quae est propria, decantarent. Quibus ille respondit: *Non, quia apud Cluniacum non cantatur.* Et illi e contra *Dominus Girardus, prior, facit eam cantare in domo nostra de Caritate; et quod in domo nostra cantatur, nos debemus cantare.* Siquidem idem Girardus a juventute sua illectus in amore sancti, cum, ad prioratum venisset, fecit festivitatem ipsius sancti per se et per suos subjectos magnifice celebrari et propriam historiam decantari. Ad quorum verba respondit prior contumaciter et dixit: *Nonne vos estis monachi Cluniacensis?* Illi responderunt cum humilitate se esse. Et ille: *Quod in vestra ecclesia cantatur cantate, et nil amplius.*⁵¹ Altare die iterum interpellaverunt eum de supra dicta re. Qui iratus interdixit eis ne ulterius de hac re eum requirerent. Sed illi perseverantes in petitione sua, tertia vice eum suppliciter exoraverunt ut eis concederet decantare historiam. Ille nimium iratus contra eos, vehementer verbis contumeliosis coepit eos arguere, eo quod ausi fuerint contra suum interdictum de hac re eum repetere insuper et scopula facit eos vapulari pro hac culpa. Nocte vera subsequente, cum se sopori dedisset, ecce beatus Nicolaus ante eum cum virga stetit sicque eum est affatus: *Tu fecisti Monachos tuos verberari causa mei. Videbis quid inde tibi eveniet. Canta.* Tunc ipse sanctus coepit antiphonam, quae sic incipit *O Christi Pietas.* Ille vero cum nollet subsequendo cantare, coepit eum vehementer verberare, more consueto magistri puero nolenti discere litteras. Quid multa? Tamdiu quippe verberando et descendendo decantavit ei antiphonam usquequo ille memoriter eam decantaret ex integro. At monachi qui circum jacebant, cum eum audissent quasi deplorando cantare supradictam antiphonam, surgentes de cubilibus suis, circumsteterunt lectulo illius cum luminaribus. Et videntes cum senium defricantem, simulque decantatatem antiphonam, vehementer abstupuerunt, quam maxime credentes aliquid secretum inesse, quod non videbant, per hoc quod oculis cernebant. Nullus tamen ausus est eum evigilare, magnopere expectantes finem rei. Cum vero bene et memoriter ille per se ipsum decantasset totam antiphonam, evigilavit; vidensque fratres astare

⁵¹ Cf. Du Cange, *Glossarium, etc.* (1883), Vol. II, p. 103: "Cantate, Cantus Ecclesiasticus vel potius missa, quae cantatur."

coram se cum luminaribus, nihilque volens eis tunc dicere, signi significacione jussit ut ad strata sua redirent, et ipse quod reliquum noctis fuit insomnem duxit cum timore et dolore. Mane autem facto, cum hora loquendi venisset et omnes in unum convenissent, dixit illis: *Indulgeat vobis, fratres, Deus, quod me fecistis tam acriter verberari hac nocte. Ite, decantate historiam sicut petistis.* Nam velim nolim concedere me oportet, ne iterum verberer sicut hac nocte vapulavi, et forsitan multo plus. Expertus enim sum hac nocte quia durum est contra stimulum calcitrare. Tum illi cum immensis precibus rogare coeperunt ut eis narraret quid vidisset et quid passus fuisset. Ille vero precibus eorum acquiescens, narravit eis omnia per ordinem sicut supra digestum est. Et probamentum verbis adiciens, exspoliavit se coram cunctis, ostendens dorsum suum verberibus dilaceratum. Tunc illi videntes haec, in laudes Dei et sui piissimi confessoris Nicholai diutius cum lacrimis demorati sunt, celebrantes ejus festivitatem cum omni gaudio et laetitia, decantantes historiam sicut petierant. Festivitate transacta, perrexit prior cum aliquibus fratribus ad priorem suum Girardum, et veniens ante eum, prostravit se ad pedes ejus. Cui prior: *Quid petis?* Ille ait: *Peto a vestra gratia ut a prioratu isto me liberetis.* Et prior Girardus: *Qua causa?* Et ille: *Quia fratres nostri me acriter fecerunt verberari a quodam.* Ad haec nimium commotus prior Girardus dixit: *Et quis ausus fuit tantum inordinationem facere?* Ad quod monachi qui venerunt responderunt: *Domne prior, noli perturbari, usque dum scias quis eum verberaverit et qua causa.* Prior Girardus, videns eos nil timoris habere, ut sapiens vir, intellegens aliquod secretum esse, jussit priori ut coram omnibus ediceret quis eum verberavit et qua causa. Et Ille: *Sanctus, inquit, Nicholaus verberavit me. Causa quae fuerit dicam.* Tunc coepit coram omnibus narrare rem gestam. Prior Girardus, admirans novitatem rei, non poterat credere, sed existimabat fabulosam esse quod audiebat. Tum prior ille: *Ut scias, domne prior, quia verum est quod audisti, probatione ostendam tibi.* Tum coram illo et omnibus qui adstabant exspoliavit se, et ostendit dorsum et scapulos nimium liventes verbere. Videns hoc prior Girardus, prae gaudio coepit flere, et in laudem omnipotentis Dei et sui piissimi confessoris Nicholai erumpens, coepit decantare antiphonam *O Christi Pietas.* Deinde jussit ut per omnes cellas sibi subjectas

supradictam historiam decantarent, habens deinceps in maximam venerationem memoriam ipsius sancti, quamvis et antea plurimum habuisset."

The following is a reprint of the thirteenth century version:⁵²

Inter innumera virtutem insignia, quibus beatus Nicolaus inter spiritales patres velut inter astra fulgida caeli lucifer luminis singularis effulsit, nostris quoque temporibus quantum sibi devote famulantibus favere, quantum suo famulatui obtrectantibus indignari consuevit, ostendere dignatus est. Qualiter autem res gesta contigerit, paucis explicare curabo. Cum nova sancti Nicolai historia de vita et miraculis ejus, scripta quidem per hominem sed homini divinitus inspirata, jam per totam paene latitudinem pro ejus dulcedinis immensitate in Christi ecclesiis longe lateque devotissime cantaretur in quadam cella quae Crux nominatur, sanctae Mariae de Caritate subjecta, pro pigritia habitantium necdum fuerat incohata. Tandem die una ejusdem loci seniores ante dominum Ytherium, suum videlicet priorem, pariter convenerunt, humiliter postulantes ut eis beati Nicolai psallendi responsoria licentiam daret. Ille vero eorum petitionibus nullatenus adquiescens, respondit omnino fore incongruum in tali negotio morem pristinum quibuslibet novitatibus immutandum. At illi patris duritiam contuentes, hujuscemodi coeperunt urgere sermonibus: *Cur, pater, audire filios contemptis?* *Cur, cum sancti Nicolai historia, spiritualis mellis dulcedine plena, tota jam paene orbe celebris (sit), non cantetur a nobis?* *Cur aliis in tanta sollemnitate epulantibus, nos a tam spiritualis convivii refectione pateris esse jejunos?* *Cur universis firme ecclesiis hac nova exultatione jubilantibus, haec sola modo muta silebit?* Cum his et similibus valde commotus prior, in tali fertur erupisse blasphemia: *Recedite, fratres: numquam enim vobis licentia a me concedetur ut relicto pristino usu nova saecularium cantica clericorum, immo jocularia quaedam, in ecclesia cui jubente Deo deservio ullatenus admittantur.* Quibus auditis, nimio pro sua repulsa rubore perfusi, reniti non valentes ulterius discipuli quieverunt, ac superveniente festivitate vespertinam matutinalemque synaxim, non sine quadam tristitia, veluti consueverant peregerunt.

⁵² *Catal. Codd., op. cit.*, I, pp. 510-511. Ms. Notice p. 502: "Codex Signatus num. 5284. Olim Folcardimantensis, deinde Colbertinus 2632 postea Regius C 3683.4.4. Foliorum 194 Columnis binis exaratus saec XIII."

Peractis vero vigiliis, ad propria strata sunt quiescendi gratia regressi. Cumque prior se in lectulo sicut ceteri collocasset, ecce beatus Nicolaus ei visibiliter terribilis valde apparuit, ipsumque pro sua obstinatione atque superbia verbis severissimis increpavit, atque per capillos a lecto abstrahens, dormitorii pavimento collisit; incipiensque antiphonam *O pastor aeterni*, per singulas notae differentias virgis quam in manu tenebat gravissimos ictus supra dorsum patientis ingeminans, per ordinem morose canendo ad finem usque perduxit. Is autem tantis flagris et tam insolita visione turbatus, clamare confusis vocibus coepit, quisque clamoribus ante se fratres protinus adunavit. Quem prostratum solo cernentes, quid viderit quidve passus fuerit sollicite requirebant. At ille, utpote amens effectus, nullum sciscitantibus valuit dare responsum. Sublatus autem fratrum manibus, in cellam infirmantium deportatur, multisque diebus correptus languore gravissimo custoditur. Ad postremum, divina miseratione et beati Nicolai interventione salvatus, congregatis fratribus ait: *Ecce, filii carissimi, quoniam vobis oboediere contempsi, duras pro cordis mei duritia poenia exsolvi. Amodo non solum quod petabitis grataanter annuo, verum quod quoad vixero ad canendam tanti patris historiam promptissimus atque paratissimus ero.*⁵³

From these two versions, the important features of the legend may be summarized briefly as follows: Some Cluniac monks at Crux, a subject monastery of St. Charitas⁵⁴ in the Loire valley, on

⁵³ Another version of this legend is included by Jacobus de Voragine in his *Legenda Aurea* as a part of a chronicle under the *Sancto Pelagio Papa*; cf. Cap. CLXXXI, pp. 841-842, ed. Th. Graesse. Certain verbal agreements indicate a close relation to our thirteenth century version. It adds no new details. The version of Jacobus is copied by a mediaeval chronicler: cf. *Mon. Germ.*, etc., Vol. XXXI, p. 427 (Alberti Milioli notarii Regini, *Liber de temporibus et aetatibus et Cronica imperatorum*).

⁵⁴ In this connection, the following historical facts regarding St. Charitas are significant. Although in origin it dates back to 700, it was destroyed in 754. Then in 1056 it was restored under the Cluniacs. Its first prior, Gerard, was appointed by Hugo, a member of that order. It came to have as tributary monasteries Reuil, in the diocese of Meaux, St. Fides of Longavilla in Rouen, St. Julien of Lesaune in Troyes, and St. Andrew of Northampton, Wenlock, and Bermonsey, England. Cf. *Gallia Christiana*, Vol. XII, pp. 403-404. For additional tributary monasteries see index to G. F. Duckett's *Charters and Records of the Abbey of Cluni* (1888).

St. Nicholas' feast day ask permission of their prior to sing a new and popular history of that saint's life, but are denied the privilege by the prior because it is not the ecclesiastical chant, and because it is the facetious composition of secular clerks. As a punishment to this prior, St. Nicholas appears to him on the night following his refusal and compels him to learn an antiphon used in his feast day services, in one version *O Christi Pietas*, and in the other *O Pastor Aeterne*. When Gerard, the prior of St. Charitas, hears of this miracle, he orders the history sung in all the subject monasteries.

In this legend, I believe, is the key to the solution of our problem, i. e., the origin of the *Miracle Play*.

With this in view, it has at least a four-fold significance for us: first, as to the period during which this innovation is related as having become established; second, as to its general character; third, as to the objection made to it by the prior; and fourth, as to the antiphon employed in the earlier version. The period during which this innovation was becoming established as a feature of St. Nicholas' feast day celebration, according to our legend, is pretty definitely fixed by the reference to Gerard, prior of St. Charitas. Since the monastery was re-established by the Cluniacs in 1056, and he was its first prior, "who had charge of it for more than thirty years," the miracle is related as having taken place some time between 1056 and approximately thirty years following, or the period during which the cult of St. Nicholas was becoming especially popular in Europe.⁵⁵ With regard to the general character of the innovation, we are here concerned with a history of the life and miracles of St. Nicholas which were not to be *read*, but *sung* for his feast day celebration. Thus we have here to do with *musical services*, an essential feature of our *Miracle Plays*.⁵⁶ Then the

⁵⁵ Cf. preceding footnote. Relative to Gerard cf. *Gallia Christiana, ut supra* "Hujus (Girardi) regimen annos amplius triginta tenuit ex lib. de miraculis S. Nicolai episcopi adeoque ejus obitu recte collocatur an. 1087 in *Chronica Vizeliacensi*."

⁵⁶ *Vide supra* text of first version: "Fratres requisierunt priorem si historiam de festivitate, quae est propria, *de cantarent*;" and of the second version: "nova sancti Nicolai historia de vita et miraculis ejus jam per totam paene latitudinem longe lateque devotissime *cantaretur*."

objection of the prior to the request of the monks is that unecclesiastical additions, new and facetious songs of secular clerks, are being made to the regular services.⁵⁷

As we shall see a little later, the unecclesiastical addition is a distinctive feature of our plays. And finally, the antiphons mentioned suggest a logical relation between the legend and the plays, in that *O Christi Pietas*⁵⁸ of the earlier legend is the choral ending of the Hildesheim scholars' play and the Fleury *dowry* play.

Now as we have already learned, this was a period of unofficial embellishments in musical offices for saints' feast day services.⁵⁹ We have observed specifically that at Rouen, during the second quarter of the eleventh century an office of this sort was composed for St. Nicholas by Isembert, abbot of Mont St. Catherine.⁶⁰ And it was during the period to which our legend refers that at St. Evrault's monastery, "secundum usum clericorum", a "history" of the patron saint was chanted in his honor, and hymns were composed to him.⁶¹

⁵⁷ *Vide supra* first version, where the prior chides the monks for singing the history: "Nonne vos estis monachi Cluniacenses? Quod in vestra ecclesia cantatur cantate, et nil amplius." Cf. also in the second version his reply to their repeated requests: "Recedite, fratres. Numquam enim vobis licentia a me concedetur ut relicto pristino usu nova saecularium cantica clericorum, immo jocularia quaedam in ecclesia cui jubente Deo de-servio ullatenus admittantur."

⁵⁸ A problem suggested by this antiphon, and by the choral endings of all our plays is: What do they indicate as to the time of presentation of the plays? At present I lack sufficient evidence to come to any conclusion, but add the following for what it may be worth. The antiphon, *O Christi Pietas*, was employed in Bayeux in the thirteenth century for St. Nicholas' feast day services, after the first vespers, during matins, and mass, and at the second vespers (cf. Ul. Chevalier, *Ordinaire et Coutumier de L'Église Cathédrale de Bayeux XIII^e Siècle* [Paris, 1902], pp. 191-192). The *Te Deum* at the close of the Fleury scholars' and the Hildesheim *Dowry* plays, of course, in the regular liturgy occurs at the close of matins. And the well-known directions added by Hilarius to his Lazarus and Daniel plays (cf. Du Méril, *op. cit.*, pp. 232 and 254) to the effect that *Te Deum* should follow if they were given at matins, and the *Magnificat*, if at vespers, indicate that plays were presented at both those hours.

⁵⁹ *Vide supra*, chap. III, p. 37.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Cf. Orderic Vitalis, *op. cit.*, Bk. III, chap. vii. Relative to the objection of the prior in our legend of St. Charitas the "secundum usum clericorum"

As far as hymns⁶² are concerned, there is sufficient evidence that the patrons of St. Nicholas also were not remiss in according the same honor to their saint.

ORIGIN OF THE MIRACLE PLAY

That the *Miracle Plays* are to be regarded as a logical sequence of these renaissance innovations is apparent when one looks to their form and spirit. Both are adequately characterized for our purpose by students of the plays. M. Sepet calls *Getron*, one of the Fleury St. Nicholas group,⁶³ a lyric dialogue with versification fashioned according to the principles of rhythmic Latin employed by Adam of St. Victor (d. 1142), the greatest Latin hymn writer of the mediaeval renaissance.⁶⁴ H. Suchier notices this same lyric quality

of the chronicler is important. It is significant that the prior at St. Evrault during this renaissance in music had received his training at Rouen under Isembert mentioned above.

For evidence that a "history" of St. Alban, at St. Albans, England, was set to music early in the eleventh century, *vide infra*, chap. VI, p. 75.

⁶² For hymns of the eleventh century to St. Nicholas cf. F. J. Mone, *op. cit.* Vol. III, pp. 450, 452, 455; *Analecta Hymnica*, Vol. I, p. 194, Vol. II, p. 202, Vol. VII, p. 260, Vol. XIVa, p. 18, Vol. LI, p. 209; E. Du Méril, *Poésies populaires latines antérieures au XIIe siècle* (Paris, 1843), pp. 170-173. It is interesting here further to note a legend in a manuscript of the thirteenth century (*Catal. Codd. Hagiog. Bibl. Reg. Brux.*, Vol. I, pp. 320-322). It relates that at Bari, shortly after the translation of the relics of St. Nicholas, a widow who worshipped that saint devotedly remarked on his feast day that it was a reproach to St. Nicholas that there was no response or prose especially for him. A scholar who loved her heard this and wrote the prose beginning "Congaudentes", and the response "Confessor Dei Nicolaus."

⁶³ E. Du Méril, *Origines Latines etc.*, p. 276 ff.

⁶⁴ *Origines Catholiques du Théâtre Moderne* (1901), pp. 71-72: "Notre pièce, en effet, est un dialogue lyrique, échangé tantôt entre deux personnages, tantôt entre un choeur et un acteur. La versification, appropriée à sa nature musicale, consiste en couplets symétriques de quatre vers de dix syllabes. . . . Ces vers n'ont rien de sublime, mais habilement mesurés selon les principes de la rythmique latine dont Adam de Saint Victor faisait vers la même époque un si bel emploi dans ses proses, ils ne manquent ni d'aisance, ni d'harmonie."

in the play by Hilarius.⁶⁵ Then in referring to the Hildesheim plays, Dr. Weydig in three different places emphasizes their hymn-like character, and even goes so far as to give them a hybrid place between hymn and drama.⁶⁶ And Petit de Julleville calls attention especially to the pagan spirit of the Fleury plays. As he puts it, they offer nothing of the liturgy, but indicate the influence and limitation of pagan antiquity.⁶⁷

Finally, E. de Coussemaker makes a classification which puts the Fleury St. Nicholas plays in the same renaissance group as indicated by Sepet, Suchier, Weydig, and Petit de Julleville. Briefly, he says: the liturgical plays are of two sorts.⁶⁸ The former, closely connected with the religious ceremonies, borrow the liturgical text, and merely paraphrase and put it into dialogue for the purposes of action. The latter (in which fall our St. Nicholas

⁶⁵ *Geschichte der französischen Litteratur*, p. 273: "Und uns von Hilarius drei lateinische Schauspiele erhalten (*Daniel, Lazarus, Nikolaus*) von denen die beiden letzteren lyrische Gesänge, man möchte sagen Arien, einschliessen."

⁶⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 14 with reference to plays represented on the feast day of St. Nicholas: "Zwei solcher noch mehr den Charakter von Hymnen tragenden Spiele stammen aus der Klosterschule von Hildesheim." Cf. p. 70 concerning the scholars' play: "Das Hildesheimer Spiel auch in Strophenbau seine Zwitterstellung zwischen Hymnen und Drama nicht verleugnet;" and cf. further p. 75: "Bei alledem blieb doch aber der Charakter der Hymne vorherrschend durch die gleichmässige Stropheneinteilung."

⁶⁷ *Les Mystères* (1880), Vol. I, p. 7. As an example of the pagan influence he quotes the following from the speech of the second clerk in the Scholars' play (Du Méril, *Origines*, p. 263):

"Jam sol equos tenet in litore
Quos ad praesens merget sub aequore."

⁶⁸ *Drames Liturgiques du Moyen Âge*, pp. ix-x: "Ceux-ci (les drames liturgiques) étaient de deux sortes: les uns se liaient étroitement aux cérémonies religieuses, et faisaient en quelque sorte corps avec elles, en empruntant le texte liturgique qu'on paraphrasait légèrement, et qu'on mettait en dialogue pour le besoin de l'action. Les autres, tout en ayant le même caractère religieux, n'avaient pas une liaison aussi intime avec le culte. Ce furent déjà de véritables créations dramatiques. Ils ont pour sujet le texte sacré; mais le développement qu'on y donna en fit des compositions spéciales dont l'étendue ne permit plus de conserver leur place dans les offices. On les représenta tantôt aux processions, tantôt pendant ou après les cérémonies, soit au chœur, soit au jubé."

plays) do not have a close connection with the religious ceremonies, but are veritable dramatic creations, special compositions which do not keep their place in the religious offices. The music of the first type is the liturgical chant, of the second, is special, even for the parts of the text borrowed from the liturgy.⁶⁹ The distinction just made is especially instructive for us when taken in connection with the objection of the prior in the first version of our legend: "Quod in vestra ecclesia cantatur cantate (the ecclesiastical chant), et nil amplius." In view of the fact that Coussemaker is one of the few who have made a careful study of the music in the mediaeval drama his remarks should have great weight. And here they are especially valuable.

An analysis of the passages here referred to reveals what is clear to one after a careful study of the plays, viz., that their verse, in form and lyric quality, suggests the mediaeval Latin hymn, and that in spirit they are characterized by unecclesiastical elements.⁷⁰ Therefore in view of the facts set forth above, I hold that the St. Nicholas *Miracle Plays* originated in connection with musical services, during the latter part of the eleventh century⁷¹ as an unecclesiastical feature of his feast day celebration, and that they are indebted to the mediaeval Latin hymn for their form. The creative impulse characteristic of the mediaeval renaissance found expression in some individual who applied the dramatic method to a legend of this popular saint whose history had already been set to music. The result was our first *Miracle Play*. Its practical significance consists in the fact that it had its inspiration

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xv: "La musique des premiers était le chant liturgique; on ajoutait seulement une mélodie spéciale à la partie du dialogue qui n'appartenait pas au texte liturgique."

"Les autres . . . avaient généralement une musique spéciale, même pour les parties du texte empruntées à la liturgie."

⁷⁰ Of course there is a common agreement that they were intended for his feast day celebration.

⁷¹ The distinctive feature in the verse of both the Hildesheim and the Fleury plays which fixes the *terminus a quo* for their composition is the employment of the two-syllable end rhyme. According to Wilh. Meyer (*Sitzungsberichte der Münchner Akademie, philos.-hist. Klasse* [1882], pp. 136-137) this form does not go back of the latter eleventh century, and is perfected during the first half of the twelfth.

in his regular feast day services. In its origin it shows a certain parallelism to that of the liturgical drama. Thus in the tropes, which in point of time preceded the Easter dramatic offices, we have to do with unofficial additions to liturgical texts; and in hymns to saints, which precede the *Miracle Play*, we have to do with unofficial additions to the religious services of the saint's feast day. Finally, when this theory of origins which I propose is taken in connection with the entry of lay clerks such as Geoffrey and Hilarius into the monasteries, with the growth of the unecclesiastical spirit in the monastic schools, with the wonderful development in music, and hymn writing, and with the awakened interest in the cult of St. Nicholas during this period, the essential and causal relation of the St. Nicholas *Miracle Play* to the features of mediaeval life discussed in the last chapter becomes evident.

Relative to the probable *place* of origin, a question of importance is that of the priority of the composition of the preserved texts. Since the authorship of one, the Hilarius *robbers'* play, fixes its time approximately within the second quarter of the twelfth century, it need not be considered here. This leaves the Hildesheim and Fleury groups, and the Einsiedeln fragment. Of the two former, Dr. Weydig⁷² has shown adequately by a comparison of the Hildesheim plays (*dowry* and *scholars'*) with those treating the same legends in the Fleury manuscript, that those of the Hildesheim manuscript (eleventh century) are the earlier and simpler compositions. Since the other two plays of the Fleury manuscript represent the same stage of development as the *dowry* and *scholars'* plays, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, they are also to be classed as later than those composing the Hildesheim group. And a comparison of the Hildesheim and Fleury versions of the scholars' legend with the fragment in the Einsiedeln manuscript makes clear that the author of the Einsiedeln play evidently employed both the Hildesheim and Fleury compositions as models. As the following table shows, on the one hand, there is in Einsiedeln and Fleury an agreement of significant words, not found in Hildesheim.⁷³

⁷² Weydig, *op. cit.*, pp. 55 ff. and 66 ff.

⁷³ For texts cf. Du Méril, *Origines*, etc., pp. 264-266; and *Anzeiger für Kunde der deutschen Vorzeit*, (1859), Neue Folge vi, cols. 207-210.

Fleury.	Einsiedeln.
"1. Nicolaus	1. Nicolaus <i>peregrinus</i> ad hospitem:
<i>Peregrinus</i> , fessus itinere ultra modo non possum tendere. suscipe me <i>peregrinum</i> .
3. Vetula.	2. Hospes ad uxorem: Estne repellendus <i>peregrinus</i> an excipien- dus?
Hunc personam commendat <i>nimum</i> (cf. E.8) et est dignum ut <i>des</i> (cf. E.7) hospitium.	3. Uxor: Pande fores isti, <i>peregrinum</i> suscipe Christi.
4. Senex:	4. Hospes ad Nicolaum: Qui requiem <i>quaeris</i> intres.
<i>Peregrine</i> , accede proprius; quidquam voles tentabo <i>quaerere</i> .	5. Nicolaus: O dapifer, vesci desi- dero <i>carne recenti</i> .
5. Nicolaus: Carnem vellem <i>recentem</i> edere.	6. Uxor: Inclyte noster Here, nova fercula <i>quaerit</i> (cf. F. 4) habere. Qui venit <i>peregrinus</i> .
7. Senex:	7. Uxor: Quam petis ut <i>demus</i> nos <i>carne recenti</i> <i>caremus</i> .
<i>Dabo</i> tibi carnem quam habeo, namque <i>carne recenti</i> <i>careo</i> .	8. Nicolaus ad ambos: Ut <i>quaesita</i> (cf. F. 4) <i>recens caro</i> cautius inveniatur Nunc est inventa <i>caro</i> <i>recens</i> Pie dolor! O mentem <i>nimum</i> feritatis habentem.
8. Nicolaus: <i>carnem</i> habes <i>recentem nimum</i> ,.....	Quod <i>scelus</i> (cf. F. 9) egesti. Ad Uxorem: tam magni <i>sceleris</i> Horrifico <i>sceleri</i> .
9. Senex et mulier simul: non est incondonabile.	

Then, the opening words of the prayer of St. Nicholas in Fleury;

"Pie Deus, cujus sunt omnia,
Coelum, tellus, aer et maria,"

are summed up in Einsiedeln in his answer to mulier, "Qui regit omnia quod est"; and the choral ending⁷⁵ *Te Deum Laudamus* of Fleury is suggested in Einsiedeln by the closing words of St. Nicholas, "Lausque Deo detur". Finally, the part played by the wife in Einsiedeln, entirely lacking in Hildesheim, is a dramatic development of the possibilities suggested in Fleury by her two-line response to her husband regarding the reception of St. Nicholas, (see F. 3 above) and by her joint plea with her husband to St. Nicholas for mercy:

⁷⁴The numbers represent the order of speeches in the plays.

⁷⁵As the reader will recall from previous notes, the choral ending in H. is *O Christi Pietas*.

"Miseri nostri te petimus;
 nam te sanctum Dei cognovimus;
 nostrum scelus abominabile,
 non est tamen incondonabile."

But, on the other hand, Einsiedeln shows some significant similarities to Hildesheim. For instance, in the Hildesheim play, the wife says, when her husband suggests murdering the sleeping boys, that such a crime would offend God too much:

"Tantum nefas, coniunx, si fieret,
 Creatorem nimis offenderet;"

but when her husband chides her with having vain fears,

"Frusta times, bene celabitur,
 Nemo sciet (si) pertractabitur,"

she consents to it: "Fiat quod vis, ego consentiam." In the Einsiedeln fragment, Nicholas rebukes the husband for having contemned the judgment of God,

"Quod scelus egesti qui tres mucrone petisti,
 Hospes eos leto dans, sumo iudice spredo!"

and the wife for having consented to the murder, as was not fitting in a woman:

"(ad uxorem) : Nec bene nupsisti quae conscientia facti fuisti
 Tam magni sceleris, quia consensisse videris
 Horriflico sceleri, nec convenit hoc mulieri."

In the Fleury version there is no suggestion of the wife's fear of their committing an offence against God. On the contrary, she incites her husband to the deed:

"Paupertatis onus sustulimus,
 mi marite, quamdiu viximus;

 Evagines ergo jam gladium;
 Namque potes, morte jacentium,
 esse dives quamdiu vixeris."

A notable similarity in detail is that *uxor* is employed exclusively for *wife* in Hildesheim and Einsiedeln, while in Fleury *vetus* or *mulier* is the rule, with *uxor* only once. As to total effect, the

author of Einsiedeln has developed the dramatic possibilities of the situation as suggested in Hildesheim and Fleury. Some of the features which show this are: the specific stage directions,^{75a} entirely lacking in Hildesheim and almost so in Fleury, the more detailed action, and the dramatic quality of the dialogue.⁷⁶ As a result of our analysis we may conclude that the Hildesheim manuscript contains our earliest plays, which occupy, as Dr. Weydig correctly puts it, a "Zwitterstellung zwischen Hymnen und Drama". Because of this and because of their priority in time over any other plays of the type, we may regard them as the first *Miracle Plays*.

Shall we, then, consider our St. Nicholas *Miracle Play* a German product? I believe not. For several reasons, I think we may logically regard it as a French creation. In the first place, its form, the ten-syllable strophe, is evidence in favor of this. According to Wilh. Meyer, whose conclusions are based on years of study, the ten-syllable verse arose in France and essentially remained there.⁷⁷

In the second place, renaissance activity found expression largely in France, especially in Normandy and the Loire valley, and centered in its schools. Recall again such famous teachers and scholars as Isembert of Rouen, Fulbert of Chartres, Odo of Orleans, Lanfranc and Anselm of Bec, Geoffrey of Le Mans, later of St. Albans, and Hilarius and Abelard. The conclusions of Léon Maître⁷⁸ add further support to this argument. He closes his study of the episcopal and monastic schools from the ninth to the

^{75a} Thus "Uxor ad Nicolaum revertens", "Intrant cubiculum ubi juvenes occisi jacent."

⁷⁶ The leonine hexameter employed gives more freedom in this respect than does the ten-syllable quatrain.

⁷⁷ See *Fragmenta Burana*, p. 118: "Der Zehnsilber ist nicht nur in Frankreich geschaffen, sondern auch im Wesentlichen dort geblieben; in der lyrischen und dramatischen Dichtkunst Frankreichs finden wir ihn äusserst oft verwendet. Z. B. das S. 56-59 erwähnte alte Sponsus-Drama besteht nur aus Zehnsilberstrophen, und von den Nikolausdrämen, welche Du Méril (*Origines*) durckt, enthält das 1. (S. 254) nach 11 Fünfzehnsilbern dann S. 256-262 nur Zehnsilber. Aber für Deutschland war der Zehnsilber ein ungewöhnliches Vermass."

⁷⁸ Léon Maître, *op. cit.*, p. 299. Wattenbach's comment is in harmony with this (*Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie* (1891), p. 97). "Im elften Jahrhundert aber gewinnen die Schulen einen solchen Aufschwung, dass in Deutschland bald kein Kleriker mehr als ausreichend gebildet betrachtet wurde,

thirteenth centuries with the statement that one cannot help recognizing that the principal schools of the Occident pertained to Northern Gaul. And Anz⁷⁹ in his masterly study of the Latin Magi Play maintains that, although in the tenth century Germany, through St. Gall, gave France sequences and tropes, France in turn in the eleventh century became the standard for Germany. Then, in French schools, as we have already learned, unecclesiastical influences were strong. A further reason for regarding the St. Nicholas *Miracle Play* as of French origin is the fact that the St. Nicholas cult was most active in France during the second half of the eleventh century. Finally, the French relations of Hildesheim during this century lend additional support to the theory of French origin. When Bernward, its thirteenth bishop, in 1006 journeyed to Tours and brought back to Hildesheim relics of St. Martin, he made one of the French centers of renaissance influence a mecca for Hildesheim monks and clerks.⁸⁰ And the fact that Hezilo, bishop from 1054 to 1079, completed his education in French schools⁸¹ suggests that French influence was a dominant factor at Hildesheim during his bishopric.⁸²

wenn er nicht in Frankreich seine Studien vollendet hatte." Cf. also Meyer (*op. cit.*, pp. 179-180), especially lines from a student's song of that period (p. 180) :

"Hospitia in Gallia nunc me vocant studia.
Vadam ergo; flens a tergo socios relinquo.
Plangite discipuli, lugubris discidii tempore propinquo.
Vale, dulcis patria, suavis Suevorum Suevia!
Salve, dilecta Francia, philosophorum curia."

⁷⁹ H. Anz, *Die lateinischen Magierspiele* (Leipzig, 1905), p. 127: "Im X. Jahrhundert war Deutschland das gebende, und von St. Gallen ging die neue kirchliche Dichtung nach Frankreich, Sequenzen und Tropen fanden eine zweite Heimstätte in Limoges und von da aus in anderen Orten. Dann begann die Kluniazenserbewegung und machte Frankreichs Kirche zur massgebenden, in der Zisterzienserreform setzte sich der gewaltige Umschlag fort. Es kam eine Zeit, da sogar St. Gallen in Norpert aus Stablo sich einen Abt französischer Schule aufdrängen lassen musste."

⁸⁰ *Vide supra*, chap. III, p. 29.

⁸¹ *Vide supra*, chap. III, p. 40.

⁸² Another fact of significance here is that a direct route from Hildesheim to Tours would take one through Fleury, and also through Belgium and Lorraine, the next most active districts for the St. Nicholas cult.

These plays, then, are an expression of the mediaeval renaissance and a new feature of the feast day celebration of a popular saint. Their origin in connection with schools is what we should logically expect, for the spirit of innovation was dominant in them. And whether the place of their original composition was Hildesheim, Fleury, Angers, or one of the numerous other schools where the St. Nicholas cult was established does not materially affect our theory. They are essentially the product of French innovations. Further, according to the evidence, these plays honor St. Nicholas, not as the patron of scholars, but of the monastery or locality where his cult was established.

A word on the subject matter and the technique of these plays is in order here. Though they include different dramatic incidents, they all emphasize one feature. The situation and the setting may be changed, but St. Nicholas always has the same rôle: he is the good bishop, the doer of good deeds for his patrons, whether they are wandering scholars,⁸³ dutiful daughters, distressed parents, unconverted pagans or Jews. This was the great *feature* of his life, the one that occurred primarily to the mediaeval writer of legends and hymns. This was the *feature* emphasized, also, in the lections⁸⁴ in connection with the services of his feast day.

The technique is simple and clearly distinguishable; it is the application of the dramatic method to popular, legendary material of the saint's life.

If, by way of summary, we reduce our problem to its simplest terms, we have the following: saints' feast day services centuries old, renaissance influences in the monasteries where a particular saint's cult was established, the history of his life set to music and hymns composed in his honor, the application of the dramatic method to these unecclesiastical features, and the instituting of a new literary fashion.

⁸³ On the basis of the evidence that the scholars' legend seems to have appeared first in the eleventh century and in Western Europe, I suggest that it may have originated in connection with the migration of students from school to school.

⁸⁴ The lections of the *Sarum Breviary* (Cambridge, 1886), *Fasciculus III*, cols. 23-36, though representing the usage of several centuries later than our period, may be regarded as typical.

CHAPTER V.

THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS, AND THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

The purpose of this chapter is to suggest a new classification for the two Latin plays, *The Resurrection of Lazarus*¹ and *The Conversion of St. Paul*.² It is unnecessary to summarize them here, for they are merely dramatizations of the two incidents indicated by their title. Two important facts in connection with what follows are that a version of each of these plays is preserved in our Fleury manuscript, which contains four of the St. Nicholas plays, and that the second version of the Lazarus story was written by Hilarius, the author of one of the remaining four St. Nicholas plays.

Now I believe the evidence tends to show, not that these plays are logically connected with the Christmas and Easter dramatic offices,³ but that they were composed in honor of Lazarus and Paul as patron saints, and hence are *Miracle Plays*. In passing judgment on this theory the reader should keep clearly in mind one feature of the mediaeval point of view already discussed: Lazarus and Paul as mediaeval saints fall in the same general class as Martial, Martin, Denis, Catherine, and Nicholas.⁴ Furthermore, the eleventh century legend of St. Martial, which made him one of the seventy-two disciples of Christ, indicates a decidedly uncritical attitude with relation to the modern distinction between *legend* and *Gospel*.

THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS

The mediaeval legend of St. Lazarus⁵ runs as follows: "St. Lazarus of Bethany, reputed first Bishop of Marseilles, d. in the

¹ In two versions. One in Fleury Ms. (*op. cit.*): cf. Coussemaker, *op. cit.*, pp. 221-234, Du Méril, *Origines*, pp. 213-225, Wright, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-53; the other by Hilarius: cf. *Hilarii Versus et Ludi*, pp. 24-34, Du Méril, pp. 227-232.

² In Fleury Ms.: cf. Coussemaker, pp. 210-220, Du Méril, pp. 237-241, Wright, pp. 42-44.

³ Cf. E. K. Chambers, *Med. Stage*, Vol. II, p. 59: "The *Suscitatio Lazari* would be appropriate enough as an addition to the *Quem Quaeritis* and the *Peregrini* in Easter week. The story is told indeed in the fourth week of Lent; but that does not seem a very likely date for the play."

Vide Supra, chap. III, p. 34.

⁴ Since my original plan included a study of only St. Nicholas and St. Catherine, I have had to limit myself through lack of time to reputable secondary authorities for the matter concerning the cult of Lazarus and the feast day of St. Paul.

second half of the first century. According to tradition, or rather a series of traditions combined at different epochs, the members of the family at Bethany, the friends of Christ, together with some holy women and others of His disciples, were put out to sea by the Jews hostile to Christianity in a vessel without sails, oars, or helm, and after a miraculous voyage landed in Provence at a place called today the Saintes-Maries. It is related that they separated there to go and preach the gospel in different parts of the southeast of Gaul. Lazarus of whom alone we treat here, went to Marseilles, and, having converted a number of its inhabitants to Christianity, became their first pastor. . . . During the . . . persecution of Domitian he was cast into prison and beheaded in a spot which is believed to be identical with a cave beneath the prison of Saint Lazare. His body was later translated to Autun, and buried in the cathedral of that town. . . . Before the middle of the eleventh century there does not seem to be the slightest trace of the tradition according to which the Palestinian Saints came to Provence. At the beginning of the twelfth century, perhaps through a confusion of names, it was believed at Autun that the tomb of St. Lazarus was to be found in the cathedral dedicated to St. Nazarius. A search was made and the remains were discovered, which were solemnly translated and were considered to be those of him whom Christ raised from the dead.”⁶

According to the evidence, then, the cult of St. Lazarus was not established in Western Europe before the latter part of the eleventh century.⁷ At the beginning of the twelfth century it was centered at Autun in the Loire valley, about a hundred miles southeast of Fleury, by the formal translation of his relics. As we have already seen in the case of other saints, no circumstances could have

⁶ Cf. Leon Clugnet, *Cath. Encyc.*, Vol. IX, pp. 97-98; and Kellner, *op. cit.*, pp. 220-224.

⁷ The statement of Mgr. Duchesne, who has made a special study of this subject, is definite and positive: “Lazare, Madeleine et leur groupe ne furent longtemps connus dans tout l’Occident que par l’Évangile et les martyrologues; ils n’ont ni légende, ni sanctuaire spécial; cette situation se maintint pendant le Xe siècle tout entier; nul lieu dans tout le monde latin où Madeleine, Lazare et ses soeurs fussent honorés avant le milieu du XIe siècle.” (Quoted from J. Bédier, *Les Légendes Épiques*, Vol. II, p. 69; source: *Annales du Midi*, t. v., 1893.)

been more favorable than this for the spread of his cult in that district. Further, when this evidence is taken in connection with the facts that Fleury was an important monastic school in the Loire valley,⁸ and that as a Cluniac center⁹ it had a subject monastery in the diocese of Autun, the existence at Fleury of a play concerning St. Lazarus, composed probably during the first half of the twelfth century¹⁰ has at least a logical explanation. Whether it was written at Fleury, Autun, or some other place is not a matter of immediate importance for us. The following are the significant facts:

1. A play having Lazarus for its subject and evidently written soon after his cult became established at Autun is found within a hundred miles of this center.

2. It dramatizes the dominant feature of his life, his distinctive legend.

3. It was written, apparently, shortly after the appearance of the early St. Nicholas plays, and in a district where the cult of that saint would have tended to popularize this dramatic feature.¹¹

4. Finally, it is the same type as the play of St. Nicholas. In technique, it is the application of the dramatic method to a legend from the life of this saint. In form, its verse is the ten-syllable strope of the Hildesheim and Fleury St. Nicholas plays. In spirit, Coussemaker classifies it according to its music and composition in the same group with the St. Nicholas plays.¹² And Petit de Julleville writes, not only concerning this version, but also concerning that by Hilarius: "Ni l'un ni l'autre ne sont purement liturgiques ce sont des œuvres originales où la libre inspiration des auteurs s'est donné carrière et a innové sans scrupule."¹³

⁸ See *Gallia Christiana*, Vol. VIII, cols. 1538-1540. According to this authority, it had at one time more than 5000 students in attendance.

⁹ Cf. E. Sackur, *Die Cluniacenser* (1892), Vol. I. pp. 201-202: "Die Abtei Fleury hatte mehrere Filialklöster, die ihr seit eher vollständig untergeben waren, Pressey in der Diocese Autun, Sacerge in Department de L'Indre, etc."

¹⁰ This dating is based on the fact that the prevailing verse form is the same as that in the Hildesheim and Fleury St. Nicholas plays.

¹¹ He was still the patron saint of this locality several centuries later: L. Petit de Julleville, *Les Mystères*, Vol. I, p. 405, records the performance of a play at Autun in 1516 on the Life of St. Lazarus, "the patron saint of the Aedui."

¹² *Vide supra*, chap. IV, pp. 46.

¹³ *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 54.

Relative to the version by Hilarius, it is significant to recall that the author was a wandering scholar who we know spent some time at Angers farther down the Loire valley, not far from Fleury. Its principal difference from the Fleury version as to form consists in a lyric freedom such as the same quality in his *St. Nicholas*, his *Daniel*, and his non-dramatic poems would lead one to expect. A comparative study of these two versions is not necessary for our present purposes. They are clearly the same type; that is the important thing for us.

The possible objection that Lazarus is not the hero of this play is not to the point here. The literary fashion initiated by the author of the *St. Nicholas* plays—and I cannot emphasize this too strongly—was to honor the patron saint, not necessarily by making him the *hero* of the drama on his feast day, but by presenting the *dominant feature* of his life. Christ appears in this play, I believe, not because it has any essential relation to the Christmas or Easter groups, but because he happens to be a principal actor in the *distinctive legend* of Lazarus' life.¹⁴

THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

In the case of St. Paul, though a feast day in his honor was established early in Western Europe, it was in memory of the translation of his relics, reputed to have taken place in Rome, and not of his conversion. According to Kellner the feast of his conversion was not in the Calendar of Charlemagne belonging to 781, but was becoming established by the tenth century.¹⁵ And after its establishment it was kept as a holiday of obligation in many dioceses of France and Germany. At all events, if, as Kellner says, the idea of the conversion soon replaced that of the translation, we may regard this feast day as established two centuries later. This is the important consideration for us.

The reasons why I believe the play, *The Conversion of St. Paul*, should be classified with the *St. Nicholas* group follow:

¹⁴ The same argument holds in the case of *The Conversion of St. Paul*.

¹⁵ Kellner, *op. cit.*, p. 207: "Der jüngste Codex aber unter den alten, der Metzer, jetzt in Bern befindlich, der dem 10. Jahrhundert angehört, hat für den 25. Januar eine Übertragung und die Bekehrung der hl. Paulus verzeichnet. Das Andenken an die Bekehrung verdrängte aber bald die Erinnerung an die Translation und gab jenem Tage einen anderen Festcharakter, unter welchem es Verbreitung und bald allgemeine Annahme fand."

1. Its technique is the same. It is the dramatization of *the feature*, the *distinctive legend* from the life of St. Paul, in connection with his feast day celebration.

2. Its form is the ten-syllable quatrain, the prevailing form in the St. Nicholas, Hildesheim and Fleury plays.

3. It appears in a district where the St. Nicholas plays have instituted a fashion for a saint's feast day celebration.

4. Its spirit is unecclesiastical. Coussemaker groups it with the plays already mentioned. In fact, as Petit de Julleville puts it: "Tout élément purement liturgique a disparu."¹⁶ In my opinion the real purpose of the play was pointed out several years ago by Sepet: "Il faut donc considérer la pièce comme composée et représentée pour la divertissement des écoliers de Saint-Benoit-sur-Loire à l'occasion de la fête d'un de leurs saints patrons."¹⁷

Thus, as I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, these plays are the same type as those of St. Nicholas; and the evidence points to the conclusion that they are an expression of the fashion instituted by the plays in honor of that saint.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 79.

¹⁷ *Origines Catholiques du Théâtre Moderne* (1901), p. 77.

CHAPTER VI. ST. CATHERINE AND HER PLAY

In this chapter I shall show that the evidence concerning the relation of St. Catherine's cult to her play at St. Albans harmonizes with that presented in the case of St. Nicholas, and shall give my reason for considering the trial and martyrdom the most probable subjects of her play. It is sufficient for the present to state that according to legend Catherine was an Oriental saint noted for her learning, that she suffered martyrdom at Alexandria in the fourth century, and that her body was carried by angels to Mt. Sinai where healing oil continually flowed from her tomb. At this place a monastery was founded in her honor.

There is no evidence of her cult in Western Europe, either through the translation of her relics, the assignment of a day to her in calendars and martyrologies, or through any sort of honoring whatever before the second quarter of the eleventh century.¹ Furthermore, during the entire eleventh century her cult centered at one place so far as France and Germany are concerned:² and that place was Rouen. In a *Translatio et Miracula* written shortly after 1050 we have a contemporary account of the establishing of her cult at the abbey of the Holy Trinity, Rouen, and of the miracles performed there through her power.³ According to this record, Symeon, a monk from the monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai, in 1025 came into Western Europe with some companions to

¹ The general sources employed in this study are the same as those indicated at the opening of the chapter on St. Nicholas.

² She was known in Italy through two hymns composed in her honor by Alphanus, bishop of Salerno (1058-1085). For text see *Patrologia Latina*, Vol. CXLVII, cols. 124 ff.; and *Anal. Hymn.*, Vol. L (1903), pp. 333-334.

³ See *Anal. Bolland.*, Vol. XXII (1903), pp. 423-438: *Sanctae Catherinae Virginis et Martyris Translatio et Miracula Rotomagensis* saec. xi; according to Ms. (R) in Codice Rotomagensi U.22, saec. xiii, fol. 109v-115v, with supplementary notes from Ms. (A) in Codice bibliothecae publicae sancti Audomari 27, saec. xi, fol. 8-11. For evidence to prove that the account was written about 1050, summarized by A. Poncelet, see *op. cit.*, pp. 423-437. For another contemporary account see *Mon. Germ. Hist. Scr.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 398-399: *Hugonis Chronicum*; cf. also *Gallia Christiana*, Vol. XI, col. 124 ff., and *Hist. Litt de la France*, Vol. XXII, pp. 122-124.

collect offerings for his monastery.⁴ When he came to Rouen, Richard, Duke of Normandy, received him kindly and gave him large offerings. These Symeon sent back by his companions, but he remained for two years with Goscelinus, a noble of Rouen. At this time Goscelinus decided to found a monastery to the Holy Trinity. This was consecrated in 1030, and Isembert was made its first abbot.⁵ In this monastery Symeon deposited relics of St. Catherine which he had brought with him from her tomb at Mt. Sinai.⁶ From these relics, three minute bones, flowed the miraculous healing oil, just as it did from the tomb of the Saint at Mt. Sinai. In short, the shrine became a mecca for the afflicted in the district around Rouen. The eighteen miracles recorded by the narrator are a conventional list, ranging from a story of how Isembert, the first abbot, was cured of a toothache by the use of the oil, to an account of a raving

⁴ Such assistance to Oriental monasteries from the people of Western Europe was evidently a common practice. Cf. L. Brehier, *L'Église et l'Orient au Moyen Âge. Les Croisades* (1907), pp. 30-31: "L'usage s'introduit d'ailleurs au Xe siècle de donner en toute propriété aux monastères de Terre Sainte des biens-fonds situés en Occident dont les moines de Jérusalem viennent recueillir les revenus. Telle est la dotation faite en 993 par Hugue marquis de Toscane et Juliette sa femme au Saint-Sépulchre: les revenus de biens situés dans les comtes d'Orvieto, devaient sevir à l'entretien des moines de Sancte-Marie la Latine de Jérusalem et des pèlerins auxquels ils donnaient l'hospitalité. L'église fondée par Charlemagne existait donc encore à cette époque. Des donations analogues furent faites par Richard II duc du Normandie au Saint-Sepulchre et même à des monastères du Sinai. Chaque année des moines venaient à Rouen et retournaient en Palestine chargés de présents. Au début XIe siècle, l'église du Saint-Sépulchre possédait plusieurs terres en Italié et dans le midi de la France." (Raoul Glaber, I, 5, 21; *Vita S. Simeonis*, M. G. ss., VIII, 210).

⁵ Cf. Orderic Vitalis, *op. cit.*, Bk. III, chap. i.

⁶ See *Anal. Bolland.*, xxii, p. 427 for the story of his securing the relics. Thus: Certain monks guarded St. Catherine's tomb and received in a vase the miraculous healing oil that flowed from it. Of Symeon the narrator writes: "Sed ut narrationis nostrae ordinem prosequamur inter eosdem fratres, quorum supra meminimus, erat quidam summae sanctitatis ac prudentialiae, nomine Symeon, qui divino spiritu plenus tamquam pater ab omnibus calebatur. Hic denique cum suae septimanae ordine supradicto fungetur officio, divina favente gratia, tali insignitus est dono. Nam cum illo salutaria olei liquore tria admodum minuta de sarcophago distillantia meruit ossa excipere: quae diligenter collecta in vitrea cum ipso oleo recondita secum conservavit multis postmodum profutura."

maniac restored to his senses before her shrine. The name of the monastery was soon changed from the *Mount of Holy Trinity* to the *Mount St. Catherine*. Rouen, then, was the center of the St. Catherine cult in Western Europe during the eleventh century. There she was a patron saint, first of her monastery, and afterwards of the district around it.

Now there are several significant facts to connect with the evidence here summarized. In the first place, the monastery of St. Catherine conducted a famous school under the direction of Isembert, who knew how by his writings to popularize a saint.⁷ A second fact of importance is that Isembert composed, as the reader will recall, a musical office to St. Nicholas; and Ainard, one of his pupils, did a like honor for St. Catherine.⁸ The significant fact in this for us is that the monastery of St. Catherine was a center of renaissance innovations for saints' services, and was in touch with the cult of St. Nicholas. Again, Isembert was a monk of the Cluniac order.⁹ This undoubtedly helped to keep Rouen in touch with the activities of the Loire valley, where the Cluniacs centered, and where renaissance influences were strong.

But since St. Albans, England, is the immediate locality for the *miraculum* of St. Catherine, it is important for us to know its relation to Normandy and Rouen, and its attitude toward renaissance innovations of the eleventh century. According to Matthew Paris, the rule of Richard, the Norman abbot who called Geoffrey to St. Albans to teach, marked the beginning of Norman supremacy

⁷ Léon Maître, *op. cit.*, p. 121: "Aux portes de Rouen, sous la direction de l'allemand Isambert, prospérait l'école de Sainte Catherine du Mont Isambert, dit une vieille chronique, ne le cédait à personne de son temps pour la connaissance des arts libéraux, et nul ne savait mieux que lui populariser un saint par ses écrits."

⁸ L'Abbé A. Collette, *op. cit.*, p. 64. Possibly Collette has in mind the one which Vitalis mentions (*Eccl. Hist.*, Bk. IV, chap. xviii): "Hic (Ainardus) fuit Teutonicus, geminaque scientia pleniter imbutus, versificandi et modulandi cantusque suaves edendi peritissimus. Hoc evidenter probari potest, in historiis Kiliani Guircburgensis episcopi, et Katherinae virginis, aliasque plurimis cantibus quos eleganter idem edidit in laudem Creatoris." According to Vitalis, Ainardus died in 1078.

⁹ Cf. E. Sackur, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 50.

there.¹⁰ And the affiliation of this abbey with Rouen is shown by the fact that Richard in 1115 called Geoffrey, archbishop of that diocese, to St. Albans to dedicate a new church there.¹¹ Relative to renaissance innovations, there is evidence that even early in the eleventh century this abbey adapted its feast day services to the same type as prevailed on the continent. Alfric, abbot 1006 ff., while chanter of the monastery, composed and set to music a *historia* in honor of its patron saint.¹² A further fact of importance in connection with our study is that by the time of the Danish invasion of the eleventh century there was in this abbey an altar to St. Nicholas. Under it the abbot concealed the relics of St. Alban.¹³ Finally, Geoffrey, the author of the Dunstable St. Catherine play, was from Normandy,¹⁴ a district in which the cult of St. Nicholas was

¹⁰ M. Paris, *op. cit.*, p. 1005. Under *Richardus decimus quintus*, 1097-1119 he writes: "Hic suscepit curam pastoralem, post mortem venerabilis *Pauli Abbatis*, determinata lite, quae in Conventu exorta fuerat, inter Normannos (qui jam multiplicati involuerunt) & Anglos (qui jam senescentes & imminuti occubuerant) post mortem dicti *Pauli Abbatis*, Anno quinto sequente, tempore *Willielmi Regis secundi*, Anno videlicet Gratiae, M. XC. VII. Hic ab egregia Normannorum stirpe trahens originem, plurimorum tam Parentum quam Amicorum fruebatur alloquiis fovebatur obsequiis, & sustentabatur auxiliis."

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1006: "Ad ejus (Richardi) quoq. titulum spectat immortalem quod ecclesiam beati Albani quam praedecessor ejus *Paulus* fabricaverat immediatus, magnifici fecit dedicari anno gratiae M. C. XV. ab Archiepiscopo Rothomagensi Gaufredo."

¹² M. Paris, *ibid.*, p. 996: "Iste (Alfricus) visione praemonitus sancti *Albani*, quam nunc cantator composuit *Historiam*, et eidem *Notam melicam* adaptavit: & auctoritate fratris sui Archiepiscopi, multis locis *Angliae* fecit publicari, diemque ejusdem Martyris honorari. Statuens ut die Jovis (nisi praeoccupatur legitimis temporibus) missa de ipso cum pertinentiis, solemniter celebretur." This Alfric was the second of that name at St. Albans.

¹³ M. Paris, *ibid.*: "In cuius (Alfrici) tempore, se praeparaverunt Dani cum rege suo, hostiliter Angliam intrare, ipsam feraliter vastaturi, vel suo denominatui subjugatur. Quod cum *Anglis* innotuit, experti saepe ferocitatem earum & avaritiam, timuerunt valde, quia Regem habebant pacificum & imbellem. Praeparaverunt, igitur arma, civitates cum castris communientes, & thesauros suos abscondentes. Abbas igitur *Alfricus*, fecit reliquias Sancti *Albani*, muro quodam salvo & secreto, cum feretro recondi, scilicet sub Altari Sancti *Nicholai*."

¹⁴ M. Paris, *op. cit.*, *Vide supra*, chap. I, p. 5.

especially active during this period; and he belonged to the secular clerks, who were leaders in literary innovations of the sort that interest us.

Before inquiring into the subject of our St. Catherine play, I give in summary her legend as compiled by Metaphrastes:¹⁵ St. Catherine, a Christian girl of eighteen, learned in philosophy beyond the scholars of her day, lived in Alexandria at the time of the Emperor Maximinus. During his reign he sent out an edict that all his subjects should appear with sacrifices and worship the god of their country. St. Catherine, from her house, heard the noise outside of people coming to worship; aroused, she hastened to the Emperor, and boldly spoke against his gods and in behalf of the true God. He was unable to argue against her successfully, but had her imprisoned, and sent out another edict ordering the wisest men of the land to appear and defend the religion of his gods. On the day appointed they came. But as a result of a dramatic debate, in which Catherine quoted in her defense passages from Homer, Plato, and the Sibyl, prophesying the birth of Christ, she overcame them all, and persuaded them, fifty in number, to accept her belief. The Emperor, enraged, ordered them burned to death at once.

On the evening of the same day some of the pious who went out to collect the remains of the martyrs found the bodies sound and whole, not a hair consumed. Then Maximinus tried to win Catherine over by flattery and promises; but since he was unsuccessful in this, he ordered her flogged and thrown into prison again. Soon Augusta, his wife, heard of this defender of Christianity, and through the assistance of Porphyrius, the general of the army, visited her in prison one night. As a result, the Empress, Porphyrius, and the soldiers were converted. After some time the Emperor had St. Catherine brought before him again. When despite his command she refused to renounce faith in the true God, at the suggestion of a prefect, he ordered made, as an instrument of torture, a

¹⁵ See *Patrologia Graecia*, Vol. CXVI, cols. 275-302. (Latin translation by Surius). Cf. also Mombritius, *Sanctuarium seu Vitae Sanctorum* (Paris, 1910), Vol. I, pp. 283-287; and *Aurea Legenda* (ed. Dr. Th. Graesse, 1890), pp. 789-797, and *Anal. Bolland.* (1907), Vol. XXVI, pp. 12-32 for Latin tr. of Arabic life closely related to early Greek texts. Concerning Metaphrastes, his period, etc., see Schaff-Herzog, *Encyc. of Religious Knowledge* (1911), Vol. X, pp. 414-416.

four-wheeled car with each wheel having nails pointing outward, and threw her in front of this. It passed over her without doing any harm, for an angel protected her; but it killed many infidels standing near. Just at this time the Empress ran out from the palace, ordered the council dismissed, and the persecution stopped. The Emperor did stop long enough to have his wife put under the most brutal and fiendish tortures, and then beheaded. Upon a protest from Porphyrius because of this atrocious deed, he had him and his soldiers put to death also. Finally, on November 25th St. Catherine was beheaded. At the execution, milk instead of blood flowed from her body. As already stated, angels carried her remains to Mt. Sinai.

This is the legend of St. Catherine. Furthermore, it is essentially all that is included in any of the early lives of her. There are differences or additions in regard to minor details in some versions, but no episodes are added.¹⁶

The feature of St. Catherine's legend is clearly her martyrdom with its double interest, her trial and her passion. This is the theme of hymns in her honor,¹⁷ of lections on her feast day. Further, this is the popular theme in later St. Catherine plays.¹⁸ The logical conclusion, then, is that just as the distinctive legends of

¹⁶ For the most complete study of her legends, see Hermann Kunst, *Geschichte der Legenden der h. Katherina von Alexandrien, usw.* (Halle, 1890). See also Hermann Varnhagen, *Zur Geschichte der Legenden der Katherina von Alexandrien* (Erlangen, 1891); H. Varnhagen, same title: reprinted from *Festschrift der Universität Erlangen* (1901), pp. 1-14. For best brief summary regarding legend and festival see Kellner, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-229. The legend of St. Catherine's conversion is evidently a thirteenth or fourteenth century addition: see Varnhagen, *op. cit.* (1891), pp. 18 ff.

¹⁷ Hymns in her honor seem to be exceedingly rare for the eleventh century. I have found the two by Alphanus (*loc. cit.*), and one in Mone, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 349-350. With regard to the lections, even the *Sarum Breviary, ut sup.* *Fasciculus III (Proprium Sanctorum, cols. 1104-1116,* which is of the sixteenth century, stresses only the feature of her life mentioned above.

¹⁸ Many of the references to lost plays on St. Catherine, as in the case of this one, are vague. For references see E. K. Chambers, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, appendix W; L. Petit de Julleville, *Les Mystères*, Vol. II, pp. 1-185; and H. Varnhagen, *op. cit.*, 1901, pp. 13-14. Wilh. Creizenach, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 125-126 gives a summary of the German Katherine play, which includes her first appearance before the Emperor, her trial, and her martyrdom.

St. Nicholas, St. Lazarus, and St. Paul were the ones dramatized on their feast days, so beyond a reasonable doubt this *feature* was the one dramatized in honor of St. Catherine.¹⁹ The play may have been only of the trial, or only of the passion, or it may have included both. The only definite suggestion from Matthew Paris is his reference to the copes borrowed from St. Albans. "Ad quae decoranda, petiti a sacrista *Sancti Albani*, ut sibi *Cape chorales* accommodarentur, & obtinuit." This suggests a number of participants, and the formal costuming which one would expect in connection with the trial scene.²⁰ However that may be, it is important to bear in mind that beyond a reasonable doubt the play, in harmony with the fashion already instituted, dramatized the *dominant feature* of St. Catherine's feast day celebration.

As to form, it was undoubtedly composed in Latin verse, possibly with French refrain. Geoffrey was a product of French schools. His play was in harmony with a fashion instituted there; and the burden of proof rests with him who holds that its form was not in accordance with that prevailing in similar plays on the continent.

¹⁹ This subject would have made a special appeal to the people in the district of St. Albans, for St. Alban was the first English martyr: see Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, Bk. I, chap. vii.

²⁰ As a matter of pure speculation, one wonders whether the fire which destroyed Geoffrey's books and the copes (*vide supra*, chap. I, p. 5, footnote) originated in connection with the play.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

The evidence in the preceding pages points to the following conclusions:

1. The Miracle Play originated in musical services as an unclesiastical feature of St. Nicholas' feast day celebration.
2. It is indebted for its form primarily to hymns in honor of saints.
3. It originated and developed in connection with monastic schools,¹ and in connection with patron saints, not of particular professions, but of particular monasteries or localities.
4. It is the application of the dramatic method to the legend or legends which expressed the distinctive *feature* of the particular saint's life in connection with the feast day celebration.
5. It is a product of the mediaeval renaissance, which was most active in Normandy and the Loire valley; and in form and spirit it is essentially a French creation.
6. It is one expression of the eleventh and twelfth century movement to free the drama from the church.²

¹ Doubtless if the evidence were complete, one would find that it became an important feature also in cathedral schools (cf. following footnote).

² Related to this type in that particular are the *Daniel*, composed by the students of the cathedral school at Beauvais, ca. 1140 (see E. de Coussemaker, *Les Drame Liturgiques*, pp. 69 ff.), and the plays referred to by Gerhoh von Reichersberg, one of the most distinguished theologians of the twelfth century. The spirit of the former is well summarized by Professor Meyer (*Fragm. Burana*, p. 56): "Gerade das Danielspiel ist ein schönes Erzeugniss der reinen Freude an Wohlaut in Worten und Tönen." Regarding the latter, Gerhoh von Reichersberg wrote in the second half of the twelfth century concerning conditions relative to feast day plays in the cathedral school at Augsburg, when he had been teacher there in 1119 (*P. L.*, Vol. CXCIV, cols. 890-891): Cum neque in refectorio (fratres) comedenter exceptis rarissimis festis, maxime in quibus Herodem repraesentarent Christie persecutorem, parvulorum interfectorem seu ludis alii aut spectaculis quasi theatralibus exhibendis comportaretur symbolum ad faciendum convivium in refectorio aliis pene omnibus temporibus vacuo. Cogor hic reminisci propriae stultitiae in amaritudine animae meae dolens et poenitens, quod non semel talibus insanis non solum interfui; sed etiam praefui utpote Magister scholarum et doctor juvenum, quibus ad istas vanitates non solummodo frenum laxavi, sed etiam stimulum addidi pro affectu stultitiae, quo tunc infectus eram, et in quo supra multos coetaneos meos profeceram." It is significant to recall, in this

7. It should probably include among the preserved plays of this type, in addition to the St. Nicholas group, the Latin St. Paul and Lazarus plays.

8. The St. Catherine *Miracle Play* of Dunstable in its origin had a close and essential relation to the early St. Nicholas plays.

connection, that the writer, shortly before teaching at Augsburg, and assisting in the plays there (cf. "etiam praefui, etc., above), had studied at Hildesheim (cf. Cath. Encyc., Vol. VI, p. 472) the home of the eleventh century St. Nicholas plays, and that the Holy Innocents were regarded as the first martyrs or saints.

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 Allen, P. S., 12, 41.
American Historical Review, 12.
Analecta Bollandiana, 2.
Analecta Hymnica, 15.
 Anz, H., 65.
Anzeiger f. Kunde d. deut. Vorzeit, 8.
 Baudot, J., 25.
 Bede, 36.
 Bédier, J., 44.
Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina, 45.
 Blume, Clemens, 15.
 Bohnstedt, Kurt. K. Rud., 22.
 Brehier, L., 31, 33.
 Bulaeus, C. E., 20.
Catal. Codd. Hagiog. Bibl. Reg. Bruxel., 2.
Catal. Codd. Hagiog. Bibl. Nat., 45.
Catholic Encyclopaedia, 19.
 Chambers, E. K., 3.
 Champollion Figeac, 9.
 Chevalier, Ul., 48, 57.
 Cloetta, Wilh., 6.
 Collette, L'Abbé A., 33.
 Collier, J. P., 20.
 Coussemaker, E. de, 8.
 Creizenach, Wilh., 3, 18.
 Daniel, H. A., 45.
 Dreves, H. M. and Blume, Clemens, 45.
 Du Cange, 4.
 Duckett, G. F., 55.
 Du Méril, 1, 58.
 Dümmler, E., 8.
English Historical Review, 39.
Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11.
 Fagniez, W. G., 37.
 Fitzstephen, Wm., 7.
Fragmenta Burana, 43.
 Francesco Nitti di Vito, 45.
 Gallia Christiania, 47.
 Garnett, Richard, 10.
 Gautier, L., 37.
 Guibert de Nogent, 30.
Hilarii Versus et Ludi, 9.
Hist. Litt. de la France, 16.
 Hroswitha, 12.
 Jehan le Marchant, 4.
 Jacobus de Voragine, 48.
 Julleville, L. Petit de, 6, 30.
 Kellner, K. A. H., 25.
 Knust, H., 77.
 Kurtz, J. H., 26.
 Lange, C., 10.
 Lanson, G., 44.
 Lefranc, A., 30.
Legenda Aurea, 48.
Liber Miraculorum Sancti Fides, 28.
 Lindner, Th., 40.
 Maitre, Léon, 39.
 Manly, J. M., 7, 12.
 Marignan, A., 25.
 Mombrutius, 76.
 Mone, F. J., 45.
 Meyer, Wilh., 43, 60.
Mon. Germ. Hist., Script., 27.
 Morel, P. Gall, 8.
 Mussafia, A., 4.
 Orderic Vitalis, 29.
 Paris, M., 5.
Patrologia Graecia, 76.
Patrologia Latina, 30.
 Pertz, 29.
 Rashdall, Hastings, 21.
Recueil des Historiens des Croisades, 46.
 Richer, 40.
 Sackur, Ernst, 39.
Sarum Breviary, 66.
 Schofield, W. H., 41.

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- Schubiger, P. A., 36.
Sepet, M., 58.
Suchier, H., 13.
Thalhofer, H., 25.
Vanhagen, H., 77.
Wace, *La Vie de Saint Nicholas*, 3.
- Ward, A. W., 7.
Warren, F. M., 29.
Wattenbach, W., 40.
Weydig, O., 1.
Wright, Thomas, 8.
Zeitschr. f. d. Alt., 8.

INDEX TO THE MORE IMPORTANT NAMES, PLACES, TITLES
AND MATTERS

- Abelard, 9 n., 14 n., 16, 41, 42.
Ad Petrum Abaelardum, 16.
Ainard, 37, 64.
Albans, St., 4 n., 21, 48, 72, 74, 78.
Allen, P. S., 12, 41 n.
Angers, 42, 49, f., 66, 70.
Anz., H. 65.
Autun, 68 f.
Bari, Italy, 45.
Becket, Thomas, 7.
Bédier, J., 44.
Bernard de Quincey, 38.
Bernward, 20, 65.
Bertin, St., 38.
Blume, Clement, 15, 43.
Bodel, Jean, 2, 3.
Brehier, J., 31, 33, 73.
Bulaeus, C. E., 20, 21, 22.
Catherine, St., 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 17,
 18 n., 20, 21, 23, 25, 34, 37, 41, 57,
 67, 72 ff.
Chambers, E. K., 3 n., 18 n., 77 n.
Chanson de Geste, 44.
Charitas, St., 51, 55 f.
Christmas Play, 18 n., 67, 70.
Cloetta, Wilh., 6 n.
Clugnet, Leon, 34.
Cluniac, 39, 55, 69, 74.
Collette, L'Abbé, 36, 37, 43.
Collier, J. P., 20.
Coussemaker, E. de, 59, 69, 71.
Creizenach, Wilh., 3 n., 18 n., 41 n.,
 77 n.
Crusades, 31.
Daniel, 14 n., 17.
De Papa Scholastico, 16.
Dowry, Play, 8, 57, 61.
Du Cange, 4 n., 52 n.
Du Méril, E., 14 n.
Dümmler, E., 8 n.
Dunstable, 6, 11, 75.
Easter Play, 18 n., 67, 70.
Einsiedeln, 8, 47, 61 ff.
Evolution, theory of in drama, 9 ff.
Fagniez, G., 37 f.
Farced Epistle in relation to drama,
 2 n., 13, 14, 15, 17.
Fides, St., 8, 28, 32, 50 n.
Fitzstephen, Wm., 6, 7, 10.
Fleury, 1, 8, 48, 57, 61ff., 67ff., 71.
Gall, St., 36.
Garnett, Richard, 9, 13.
Geoffrey of St. Albans, 5, 6, 9, 21, 41,
 61, 64, 74, 75, 78.
Gerbart of Rheims, 40 n.
Gerhoh von Reichersberg, 79.
Getron and Euphrosina, 9, 58.
Guibert de Nogent, 30.
Helena, St., 31.
Hezilo, Bishop of Hildersheim, 40, 65.
Hilarius, 9, 13, 14 n., 16, 41, 42, 59,
 61, 64, 67, 70.
Hilarius, his *Daniel*, 70.
Hildesheim, 8, 15, 19, 22, 29, 38 n., 40,
 47, 57, 61 ff., 65, 66, 69, 71.
Hroswitha, 11, 12.
Hymns, 36, 37 n., 43, 57, 58, 59, 60,
 64, 66, 77.
Isembert, 37, 57, 58 n., 64, 73, 74.
Jacobus de Voragine, 19, 55 n.
James, St., 32.
John the Baptist, 34.
Julleville, Petit de, 6 n., 30, 34, 59,
 69, 71.
Kellner, K. A. H., 26 n., 32, 35 n., 70.
Lanfranc, 41, 42.
Lazarus, 13, 14, n., 34, 67 ff., 78.
Legenda Aurea, 19, 55 n.
Lindner, Th., 40 n.
Liturgical play, 10, 13, 17, 59, 61.
Liturgical associations, 10, 13.
Loci sancti (St. Nicholas), 46 ff.
Maître, Leon, 30, 64.
Manly, J. M., 3 n., 4 n., 7, 10, 12.
Marignan, A., 25 n., 27, 29 n., 35.
Martial, St., 34, 67.
Martin, St., 29, 32, 34, 65, 67.
Mary, Virgin, 6, 33, 34.

- Meyer, Wilh., 43, 64, 79.

Miracle Play, 1-10, 14, 17, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 36, 37, 39, 40, 45, 51, 56, 58, 60, 64, 65, 79.

Monasteries, mediæval, 24, 37 ff., 72, 73.

Monastic literary drama, 11.

Monumenta Germaniæ Historica Scriptorum, 23.

Morality, 4.

Nicholas, St. 1, 2, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14 n., 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 34, 37, 38 n., 41, 45 ff., 56, 60 ff., 64, 67, 71, 72, 74, 75, 78.

Myra, Asia Minor, 45.

Nerra, Fulk, 49.

Notre Dame, miracles of, 4, 23n.

O Christi Pietas, 57, 62n.

Odo of Orleans, 41, 42, 64.

Orderic Vitalis, 29 n., 50, 74, 76.

Paris, Matthew, 5, 21, 42, 74, 78.

Paul, St., 34, 67 ff., 70 ff., 78.

Plays, time of presentation of, 57 n.

Poncelet, A., 72 n.

Rashdall, Hastings, 21, 22.

Renaissance, Mediæval, 40 ff., 60, 64, 66, 74.

Representacio, 3 n.

Richer, 40 n.

Robbers, play of 8 ff.

Rome, 32.

Rouen, 37, 48, 57, 64, 72, 73, 74, 75.

Rustebeuf, 4, 6 n.

Saints,
cult of, 25, 26 ff., 30, 45 ff., 66.

feast days of, 13, 32 ff., 36 n., 39, 61, 66.

legends of, 12.

lives of, 17.

Oriental, 33, 72.

relics of, 27 ff.

pilgrimages to shrines of, 30 ff., 50, 73.

translations of, 28, 29, 45 ff., 68, 70.

Schofield, W. H., 41 n.

Scholars, play and legend of, 8, 22, 57, 61.

School saints, 13, 14, 17 ff., 22, 39, 66.

School play, 17.

Symeon, 72, 73.

Sepet, 58, 59, 71.

Sponsus, play of, 17.

Stephen, St., 2 n., 4, 14, 15.

Suchier, H., 13, 14, 58, 59.

Terence, 11.

Trope, 15 n., 37 n., 61.

Tunison, J., 12.

Unclesiastical influences, 24, 35, 40 ff., 56, 57, 60, 66, 76.

Vernacular, employment of, etc., 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

Vincent, St., 28.

Wace, 3, 19, 22.

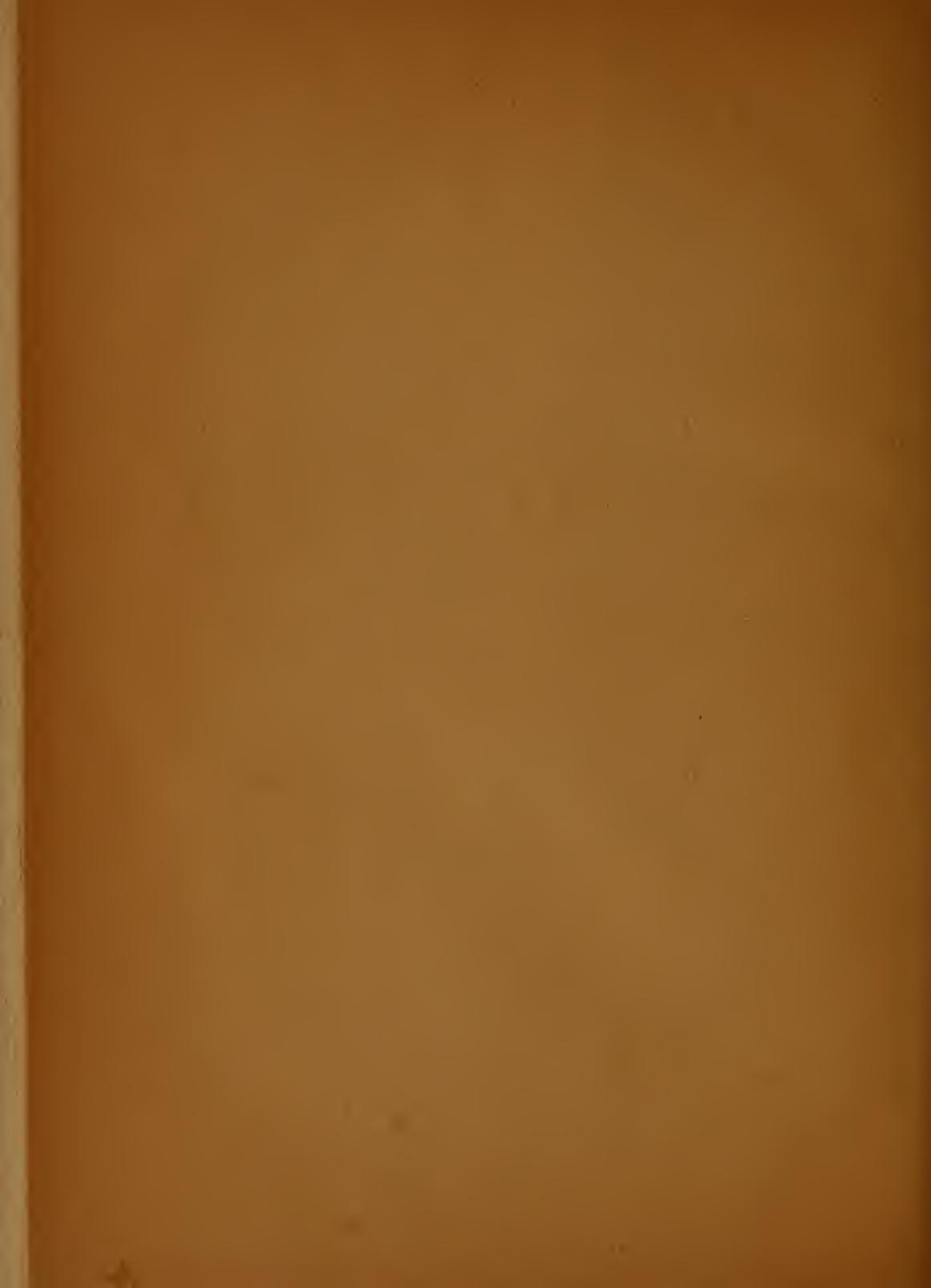
Ward, A. W., 7 n., 11.

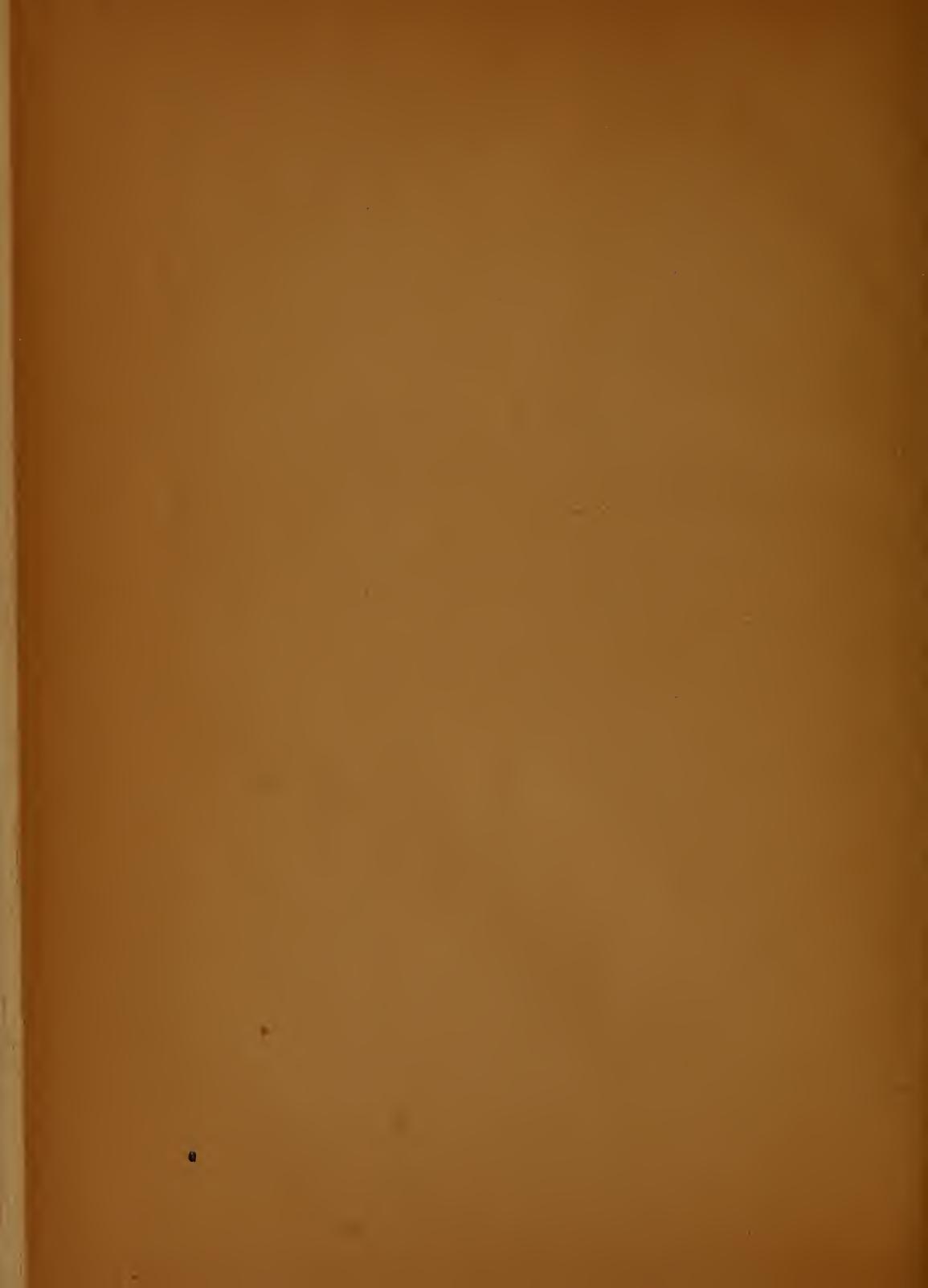
Warren, F. M., 29.

Wattenbach, W., 40.

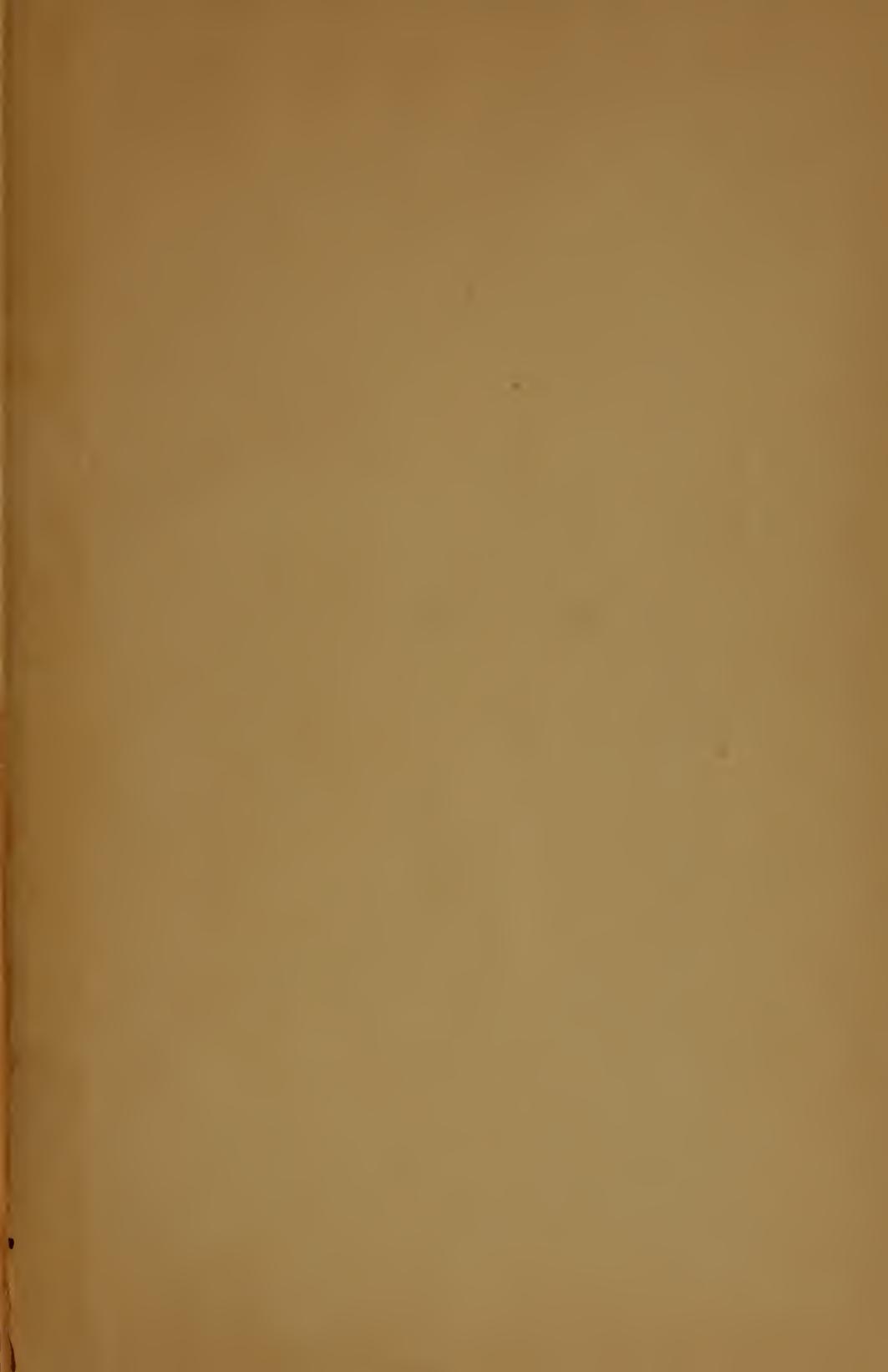
Weydig, Otto, 1 ff., 17, 18 n., 20 n., 23, 33, 59, 61, 64.

Young, Karl, 15 n.









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